

A
DISCOURSE
OF
SCHISM:

S H E W I N G,

- I. *What is meant by SCHISM.*
- II. *That Schism is a Damnable Sin.*
- III. *That there is a Schism between the Establish'd Church of England, and the Dissenters.*
- IV. *That this Schism is to be charged on the Dissenters side.*
- V. *That the Modern Pretences of Toleration, Agreement in Fundamentals, &c. will not excuse the Dissenters from being guilty of Schism.*

Written by way of LETTER to Three Dissenting Ministers in Essex, viz. Mr. Gilson and Mr. Gledhill of Colchester, and Mr. Shepherd of Braintree.

To which is annexed,

An ANSWER to a Book intituled, *Thomas against Bennet, or, The Protestant Dissenters Vindicated from the Charge of SCHISM.*

By THO. BENNET, M. A. Rector of St James's in Colchester, and Fellow of St John's College in Cambridge.

The THIRD EDITION.

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DISCOVER OF SCHEM



THE PREFACE.

I Have endeavored in the following DISCOURSE, to make our tedious and intricate Disputes concerning Schism, both short and clear, and level to the Understandings of the most Unlearned Persons.

To this end I have been obliged to explain the Nature of Schism, and manage the Charge of it against the Dissenters, in a Manner somewhat Different from that of our best Authors, who have formerly writ upon the same Subject. But those, who are in any measure acquainted with Books, will soon perceive, that my Principles and Notions are the very same, which have been constantly received and maintained by the Conforming Divines.

The whole Controversy turns upon the Determination of this single Question, Whether the Established Church does

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impose any one Unlawful Term of Lay-Communion, or no. If the Established Church does impose any one Unlawful Term of Lay-Communion with her; doubtless she is Schismatical, and the Separation of the Dissenters is not only Lawful, but Necessary. But if the Established Church does not impose any one Unlawful Term of Lay-Communion with her; then 'tis utterly impossible for the Dissenters to justify their Separation from her.

This ought to be very carefully considered by those Dissenters, who (to gain an Office, or the like) will join in our Communion. On which side soever the Schism is to be charged, I am sure this practice is utterly inexcusable. For if the Terms of our Lay-Communion are not sinful, 'tis a damnable sin to separate from our Communion: But if they are sinful; 'tis a damnable sin to join so much as once in our Communion.

I beseech these Persons, as they tender their Eternal Salvation, not to deceive themselves. Let them advise with their Teachers concerning the Lawfulness of qualifying themselves by occasional Lay-Communion with the Established Church. If their Teachers tell them, that 'tis sinful so to do; how dare they venture on

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a sinful Action? But if their Teachers tell them, that it is not sinful so to do; I am sure (and I think I have in the following Discourse evidently proved) that they are guilty of Schism, in separating from the Established Church, with which they own it Lawful to join in Lay-Communion, when their Interest or Honor leads them to it.

I hope those Gentlemen, to whom I have addressed the following Discourse, will speak fully, plainly, and clearly to these Points, and thereby satisfy their Followers; 1. Whether they do believe it Lawful to join in Lay-Communion with the Established Church. 2. Whether, upon supposition that it is Lawful to join in Lay-Communion with the Established Church, it be not, in their Opinion, a sin to separate from her. To these Questions I expect that they should return a Direct and Satisfactory Answer.

Whatever some Men think, Ecclesiastical Divisions are not contemptible Matters. The sinfulness of them is manifest to every Person that reads the Scriptures. And besides, our own Experience has convinced us of the numberless Mischiefs, which Religious Quarrels have wrought in this Nation. 'Tis not difficult to de-

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monstrate, that all our late and present calamities, do owe their birth to these Spiritual Contests: and that our Civil misfortunes will never end, till our Churches wounds are healed.

And therefore I intreat the Dissenters seriously to consider, Whether they will be able to justify these dreadful effects of their Separation at the last Great Day. Will they then be able to say, that they did All that was possible to prevent them; and that they would never have caused or kept up these Disturbances, if they could with a good Conscience have comply'd with the Established Church? Will they then think, that a Christian ought to esteem the supposed Inconveniences of a Surplice, a Form of Prayer, the Cross in Baptism, or the like, more grievous and intolerable, than rending and tearing the Church, which is the Body of CHRIST, in pieces?

Certainly nothing but the danger of damnation by Conformity, can justify Non-Conformity. And therefore I must once and again beg the Non-Conformists to ask their own Hearts this plain Question, Do I verily believe in my Conscience, that I shall be damned, if I join with the Established Church? For if they do not
be -

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believe, that Conformity will damn their Souls, they are indispensably bound to practise it.

For my part, I can assure the World, that I had never troubled it with the following Discourse, had I not been extremely zealous for the eternal Welfare of the Dissenters. Perhaps I may say without a breach of Modesty, that I have sufficiently examined the Merits of their Cause: and I solemnly and sincerely profess, that to the very best of my weak Judgment, I found so little reason for their Separation from the Established Church, and so much against it; that I cannot but think their Souls in Great Danger by such unjustifiable courses.

I send this Book abroad with an earnest desire of doing them good, by opening their Eyes, and shewing them the Nature, Guilt, and Consequences of their sin. And whatever the Success may be, I doubt not, but that GOD, who knows my Heart, will accept of my poor Endeavors.

I confess, I am not a little confident of the goodness of my Cause: and till some Person or other can prove that I am mistaken in it, I shall think my self obliged not to desert it, whilst I am able to guide a Pen in the Defence of it.

The Preface.

I hope the Reader will excuse me for annexing an Answer to Thomas against Bennet, to the Discourse of Schism; especially since the Answer is short, and for that reason tolerable. The truth is, I was unwilling to burden this Book with a large Reply to such a Writer. And perhaps, had not this occasion offered it self, I should never have taken notice of him.

I must add, That tho' the Contents of the Abridgment of the London Cases are not my own, but the Sense (and generally the very Words) of others, who are infinitely superior to me; yet since my Adversary has been pleas'd to suppose and make them mine, I have answer'd him accordingly.

Colchester,

Feb. 21, 1701.

THO. BENNET.

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*A Discourse of Schism, written by way of
Letter to Mr. Gilson and Mr. Gledhill,
Teachers of Dissenting Congregations at
Colchester; and Mr. Shepherd Teacher
of a Dissenting Congregation at Brain-
tree, in Essex.*

C H A P. I.

The Occasion and Method of this Discourse.

GENTLEMEN,

BEFORE I enter upon the Consideration of those important Questions, which I shall endeavor to state and determine in the following Papers; give me leave in a few words to remind you of the Occasion of this Letter.

When I had promised to undertake the great Charge of St. *James's* Parish, the most Divided part of this great and populous Place; I could not but foresee many Difficulties in the execution of my Ministerial Office. And therefore I made it my first Resolution, that in spite of all Opposition I would be faithful to that God whom I serve, and that Church of which I have the honor to be a Priest, in striving heartily to reclaim the Souls intrusted with me from all such things as might hinder their eternal Salvation.

Gentle-

Gentlemen, I always thought, and am still verily persuaded, that Schism is one of the many Crying Sins of this Nation; and I could not but know, that my own Flock was miserably guilty of it. I judged it therefore necessary in the Course of my Preaching to treat of this Matter; and to inform my Congregation of the heinousness of this Crime, and that those who dissent from the Established Church, are guilty of it.

I was something surprized, I confess, to find my self immediately charged with false Doctrine upon this account: but was glad notwithstanding to hear that the Dissenting Teachers were willing to justify themselves in this particular. I therefore professed my readiness to comply with a Man's desire of such a Debate with the Dissenting Teachers concerning this point, as might be fairly managed, and tend to the Conviction or Satisfaction of any Doubting Christian.

Some time after I was asked, Whether I would be willing to hold a Conference with an *Anonymous* Dissenting Teacher, who would come out of the Country to Dispute with me upon the point of Schism. I answered, That I hated Verbal Debates, which generally ended in Passion. Besides, 'tis but too common upon such occasions for Disputants to run from the point; and for the Auditory to mis-report the Proceedings in favor of that Opinion, towards which their Weakness or Affections make them lean. I proposed therefore, that Papers might be exchanged on both sides, before sufficient Witnesses; and that by mutual Agreement they should be printed, without any Alterations or Amendments made after the Delivery of them to each other.

Soon

Soon after this I was informed, that the Dissenting Teacher did Consent to hold a Conference by Writing (and I suppose, with a design to have it printed too) and that it was expected I should begin the Controversy. I could indeed have made many just Objections against this Condition, for some reasons which I need not mention: But yet being desirous to bring the Matter to a speedy issue, I resolved to accept it. And accordingly I acquainted the Person who first proposed the Conference to me, that I would Compose a Treatise upon this Subject; and thereby furnish my Opponent with Matter to work upon. This he seemed pleased with, as a very fair Method of proceeding.

You see, Gentlemen, how I was engaged with a nameless Adversary; tho' I have reason to believe, I confess, that Mr. *Shepherd* was the Person provided for me. However, because I have since understood, that you were all ready to undertake the Defence of your Cause; and because some persons have so often, and so confidently reported, that I durst not enter the Lists with any of you; therefore I thought it advisable (or rather, the Clamors of some Persons have made it necessary for me) to print this *Discourse of Schism*, by way of Letter to you all: hereby inviting any one, or all of you, to return such an Answer to it, as may be esteemed your joint Opinion, and united Judgment.

These things, Gentlemen, being premised, I shall now endeavor to justify what I preached, and to maintain my Charge of Schism against the Dissenters, by shewing,

1. What is meant by Schism.
2. That Schism is a Damnable Sin.

3. That

4 *A Discourse of Schism.* Chap. II.

3. That there is a Schism between the Established Church of England, and the Dissenters.

4. That this Schism is to be charged on the Dissenters side.

5. That the Modern Pretences of *Toleration, Agreement in Fundamentals, &c.* will not excuse the Dissenters from being guilty of Schism.

C H A P. II.

The Nature of Schism explained.

First then, I am to shew what is meant by *Schism*. The word *Schism* signifies *Division*; and consequently every Division, of what sort soever it be, may be called a Schism. But in our present Controversy the word is taken in a limited sense, and signifies a *Division of Christians*, a breach of that outward Church-Union or Communion in Love and Peace, which ought to be practised by them. The Church of Christ is the whole Society of Men professing the Faith of *Jesus Christ*, being united to him their Common Head, and to one another, as Members of each other. This appears from *Ephes. 1. 23.* where the Church is called Christ's Body; and *Chap. 4. vers. 15, 16.* the Apostle exhorts his Disciples, That they, *speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole Body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love.* The same Apostle also, in another place, speaks of *holding the head,* from

from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministred, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God, Coloss. 2. 19.

From hence it is plain, that the Church is the Body of Christ; and since 'tis absurd to suppose, that the Church is a Natural Body, therefore it must be a Political one. Now a Political Body is a Society of Men governed by one supreme Head; and this Society, so governed, may be either Civil, or Spiritual. A Civil Society, or Civil Political Body, is what we call a Common-wealth, or Kingdom: but a Spiritual Society, or Spiritual Body Politic, is what we call a Church, or Religious Society, governed by the supreme Head or Ruler of it. And thus the Church of Christ is a Spiritual Society, or Spiritual Body Politic, governed by its supreme Head or Ruler, *Jesus Christ*.

Now the Government of a Body Politic, whether Civil or Spiritual, must be administred by the assistance of inferior Governors, in subordination to the supreme Head. And therefore as in Kingdoms inferior Governors must constantly be appointed, to carry on the great Business of Civil Government: so in the Church of Christ, or Spiritual Body Politic of Christians, there are inferior Governors appointed by Christ himself, for the Administration of Spiritual Government. For *he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, Ephes. 4. 11, 12. The Duty of which Governors it is, To take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them Overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood, Acts 20. 28.*

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And

And whereas in a Civil Body Politic or Kingdom, the inferior Governors appointed under the King or Supreme Head, are called Magistrates: in the Church of Christ, our Spiritual Body Politic, the inferior Governors under Christ our Supreme Head, are called the Clergy. And as 'tis the Duty of the People of a Kingdom to obey the Magistrates in Civil Matters: so 'tis the Duty of Lay-persons, or the inferior People of a Church, to obey the Clergy in Spiritual Matters, relating to the worship of God, and the health of their Souls; according to God's Command, *Heb. 13. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an account.*

These things then being premised, 1. That the Church is a Political Body. 2. That Christ is the Head of this Political Body. 3. That the Clergy are the inferior Rulers in this Body Politic under Christ. 4. That the Layety or Lay-persons are obliged to obey the Clergy, as their Rulers, in Spiritual Matters; I say, These things being premised, 'twill be no difficult Matter to explain the Nature of *Schism*. For *Schism* in the Church or Spiritual Body Politic, is the same with Sedition, Faction or Tumult, in the State or Civil Body Politic: and therefore I shall explain the one by the other.

When all the People of a Kingdom, *viz.* both the inferior Magistrates, and all others subject to them, do live in perfect agreement with each other, under the Government of their Supreme Head or King, and quietly perform their several Duties in their respective Stations; then we say, There is peace in that Kingdom. And accordingly, when the Clergy and Layety of the Church do live in perfect agreement with each other, and quietly perform

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form their several Duties in their respective Stations according to Christ's Command; then we say, They practise Church-Union or Communion.

But on the other side, when there is Discord, or Quarrel, or other Disturbance, either between the Magistrates and the other People of a Kingdom; or between two contending Parties, either of Magistrates only, or of inferior Subjects only; or between two contending Parties of inferior Subjects, headed and led on by their proper Magistrates: Then we say, There is Sedition, Faction or Tumult in that Kingdom. And accordingly, when there is Discord, or Quarrel, or other Disturbance in the Church, either between the Clergy and the Layety; or between two contending Parties, either of the Clergy only, or of the Layety only; or between two contending Parties of the Layety, headed and led on by their proper Clergy: Then we say, There is a Schism in the Church.

CHAP. III.

That there is a Schism in the Church, First, when persons not duly Ordained do usurp the Office of Clergymen.

I Shall not enter upon an Inquiry into all the several Methods, by which Sedition, Faction or Tumult, may be caused or carried on in the State; or by which Schism may be caused or carried on in the Church. Nor shall I busy my self in a nice Distinction of Sedition from Faction, or the like; or of some sort of Schism from another. This

is certain, that the peace of a State is broken and destroyed, *First*, When those who are not legally Commissioned by the supreme Head or King, do usurp the Office of Magistrates, and exercise Jurisdiction over the People. *Secondly*, When the People do refuse Subjection to their proper Magistrates, and adhere to others in opposition to them. *Thirdly*, When the People, tho' headed and led on by their proper Magistrates, are divided into Parties, mutually condemning, and opposing, and quarreling with each other. I need not enlarge upon these Cases. Every Man will readily grant, that such proceedings are utterly inconsistent with the peace of a Nation.

And accordingly, the Peace of the Church is broken and destroyed, *First*, When those who are not legally commissioned by Christ, the supreme Head of the Church, do usurp the Office of Clergymen, and exercise Spiritual Jurisdiction over the Layety. *Secondly*, When the Layety do refuse subjection to their proper Ministers, and adhere to others in opposition to them. *Thirdly*, When the Layety, tho' headed and led on by their proper Ministers, are divided into Parties, mutually condemning each other, practising opposite ways of Worship, opposing each others interest, endeavoring to gain Profelytes from each other; and, in a word, openly quarreling with each other upon the account of Spiritual Matters. In these (and in many other) Cases 'tis notorious, that there is a Schism in the Church; a breach of that outward Church-Union or Communion in Love and Peace, which all Christians, whether Clergy or Lay-persons, are bound to preserve.

First, I say, there is a Schism in the Church, when those who are not legally commissioned by Christ

Christ the supreme Head of the Church, do usurp the Office of Clergymen, and exercise Spiritual Jurisdiction over the Layety. And consequently all those persons, who are either not at all Ordained to the Ministry by the Imposition of hands, or are Ordained by Imposition of such Persons hands, as have no Authority to Ordain; all those persons, I say, are guilty of Schism, if they execute the Ministerial Office. And all those that follow such Guides as these are, are Schismatics also; because they join with, and abet usurping Pastors.

This I need not prove by Arguments, because 'tis so frequently asserted by the most eminent Dissenters. Nor shall I multiply Quotations out of your own Authors to this purpose; because all that are in any measure acquainted with your Controversial Writers, may so easily furnish themselves. Only for the sake of some less learned persons, who may possibly read these Papers, give me leave to produce some passages of one of the latest Writers of your own Party; I mean the Author of that Letter to Mr. *Burroughs*, which was printed somewhat above a Twelve-month since.

This Author, who endeavors to excuse the Dissenters from the guilt of Schism, which Mr. *Burroughs* had charged them with, (a) tells us, that *Qualification* (for the Office of the Ministry) *without a rightly derived Commission, makes but a Thief or a Robber.* So that herein (says he) *you and we agree in Thesis.* And again, Mr. *Burroughs* having said, that the Dissenting Pastors have no lawful Call to the Ministry, the same Writer (b) answers, *This indeed, if it could be proved, were enough*

(a) Letter to Mr. *Burroughs*. Lond. 1700. p. 25.

(b) Ibid. p. 33.

to convict both us and them (that is, both the Pastors and People) for Schismatics. And whereas there are some Dissenters amongst us, who do not think any Imposition of hands to be necessary, but account a popular Choice sufficient Ordination; this Author fairly gives up their Cause. *Those Dissenters* (says (c) he) *that think themselves unconcerned in this Matter, we are not now to answer for; nor are we concerned in what you say of them.* And again, *The Declamation* (says (d) he) *which you make against Popular Ordination, we are not at all concerned in; but join with you in our hearty wishes, that they that are, would deeply consider it.*

C H A P. IV.

That there is a Schism in the Church, Secondly, when the Layety do refuse subjection to their proper Ministers, and adhere to others in opposition to them.

S*Econdly, There is a Schism in the Church, when the Layety do refuse subjection to their proper Ministers, and adhere to others in opposition to them. This Position, Gentlemen, will be readily granted by you; or rather, 'tis already agreed between the Church of England Divines and the Dissenting Teachers. But then here arises a very great Question, viz. What may be judged an Opposition of the People to their proper Ministers? For the Resolution of which Question, give me leave to make a Supposition.*

(c) Ibid. (d) Ibid. p. 49.

We all know, that every Corporation-Town in *England* is governed by their respective Magistrates, appointed by the Direction of their Charter from the King. And when all the Inhabitants of any Corporation-Town do quietly submit to the Directions of the same Magistrates; doubtless the Town is at peace. But let us then suppose the Circumstances of the place to be so unhappy, that the Inhabitants of it do not quietly submit to the Directions of the same Magistrates; but that there are distinct Governments set up, the one within, and contrary to the other. There are distinct and opposite Mayors perhaps, distinct and opposite Courts of Aldermen, and distinct and opposite Benches of Justices; and all these do exercise the same Functions, and pretend to the same Authority, and the People apply themselves for Justice to those whom they think the best, or the most rightly constituted Magistrates. 'Tis evident, that in such a Case, both parties of Magistrates cannot be the proper Magistrates; and therefore the People that follow and adhere to that party who are not their proper Magistrates, do most certainly oppose those that are their proper Magistrates.

And accordingly in the Church of Christ there are many great numbers of Christians, whom we call National Churches, and these National Churches are to be governed in Spiritual Matters by their respective Clergy. And if any National Church does quietly submit to the Directions of the same Clergy, and join constantly with them in God's public Worship; doubtless that part of the Catholic Church is at peace, and lives in Love and Union. But then let us suppose the Circumstances of that part of Christ's Catholic Church to be so unhappy, that the Layety of

it do not quietly submit to the Directions of the same Clergy, and that they do not join constantly with them in God's public Worship; but that there are distinct and opposite Sets of Clergymen, the one Episcopal, the other Presbyterian, a third Independent, &c. and all these do pretend to derive their Authority from Christ, and to be his Ambassadors, and do all exercise the same Functions, and the People join themselves in Worship, and apply themselves for Instruction, to those whom they think the best, or the most rightly constituted Clergy. 'Tis evident, that in such a Case, all these Sets of Pastors cannot be the proper Ministers of the People of that National Church; for God is not the Author of such Confusion. And therefore the People, that follow and adhere to such as are not their proper Ministers, do most certainly oppose those that are their proper Ministers.

Now when it appears, who those persons are, whom the Layety of any part of the Catholic Church are to account their only proper Ministers; then the Layety of that part of the Catholic Church are obliged to join with no Pastors but those in the Worship of God, and to obey all their lawful Directions in Matters of a Spiritual Nature. But as for all other opposite Ministers, the Layety are to esteem them Schismatical Leaders. And all those Lay-persons, who follow such Schismatical Leaders, and espouse their Interest, and join with them in public Worship, and receive their Instructions, and obey their Directions in Spiritual Matters, not regarding the only proper Ministers of that National Church; all such Lay-persons, I say, do thereby most certainly oppose their proper Ministers, and are consequently guilty of Schism.

C H A P. V.

*That there is a Schism in the Church,
Thirdly, when the Layety, tho' headed
by their proper Ministers, are divided in-
to Parties, &c.*

T*Hirdly*, There is a Schism in the Church, when the Layety, tho' headed and led on by their proper Ministers, are divided into Parties, mutually condemning each other, practising opposite waies of Worship, opposing each others Interest, endeavoring to gain Profelytes from each other; and in a word, openly quarreling with each other upon the account of Spiritual Matters.

Peace, and Quarreling; Unity, and Division; Agreement, and Condemnation of each other; practising the same, and practising opposite waies of Worship; rejoycing in, and opposing each others interest; striving together for the glory of God, and endeavoring to gain Profelytes from each other: All these things, I say, are so directly and apparently contrary to each other, that I shall not wast my own time, or weary your patience in proving them to be inconsistent. Wherefore 'tis notorious and manifest, that when and where there are such Division, mutual Condemnation, opposite waies of Worship, thwarting of Interests, striving to gain Profelytes to Parties; and in a word, any open Quarreling with each other upon the account of Spiritual Matters; then and there, I say, there is a Schism in the Church, a Division of Christians, a Breach of that outward Church-Union or Communion in Love and Peace, which

is the indispensable Duty of all Christians whatsoever.

Thus, Gentlemen, I have briefly shewn the Nature of Schism; and I hope, I have made it plain enough for persons of the Meanest Capacities. As for the Application of this Doctrine to our selves, that shall be made hereafter in its proper place.

CHAP. VI.

That Schism is a damnable Sin.

S*Secondly*, I am now to shew, that *Schism* (the Nature of which I have been hitherto explaining) that Schism (I say) is a damnable Sin.

I need not tell you, that all Sin is damnable; for this is granted on all hands. Now that Schism is a sin, a most heinous and abominable sin, does plainly appear from its being so directly opposite to that Spirit of Love and Union, which is the peculiar Mark, and distinguishing Character and Badge of Christ's Disciples; and without which Spirit the Scriptures do plainly declare it impossible for any Man to be saved.

Men may much better pretend, that 'tis Lawful to disturb the Peace of the State, than that it is Lawful to disturb the Peace of the Church. Now Eternal Damnation is the sure Reward of those that disturb the State; and what Degree of Damnation then shall those persons be forced eternally to endure, who disturb the Peace of the Church? Damnation, eternal Damnation, is indeed a most terrible Sentence: but 'tis Christ who pronounces it against the Schismatic, and not I my self. Christ
has

has plainly told us, that if we would avoid the Torments of Hell, we must most cordially and intirely love one another, and agree, as far as 'tis possible, with all Mankind. But, alas! the Schismatic is so far from doing this, that he disturbs the Church, and quarrels with his Brethren and Spiritual Rulers, even about Matters of Church-Communion and the Worship of God; which are (of all others) the most necessary for Men to agree in.

The Church, as I have already shewn, is the Mystical Body of *Christ Jesus*. Now I appeal to any Man, whether it would not be a most accursed Villany to rend and tear one Limb of Christ's Natural Body from another, to mangle and divide that Veil of Flesh, with which he was pleased to be cloathed for our sakes. But the rending of Christ's Mystical Body is a much greater Impiety, and a far worse Injury to him. Because he prefers his Mystical Body the Church, before his own Flesh, or Body Natural. For he gave his Flesh to be crucified for our sakes; and this he did not by constraint, but most willingly and freely. But is he willing and content to have the Church, his Mystical Body, pulled asunder and destroyed, and that even by the very Members of it? No. He dreads this hellish Usage more than a thousand Crucifixions.

For consider, how earnestly he pleads with his heavenly Father, that this Calamity may not befall him. How passionately does he beg, that his Spiritual Body the Church might never be rent or torn by Divisions, but remain for ever in the most perfect Unity? *Holy Father* (says (a) he) *keep thro' thine own name those whom thou hast given me; that they may be one, as we are.*——Neither pray I for

(a) John 16. 11, 20, 21, 22, 23.

these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the World may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, have I given them: that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one; and that the World may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Can any thing be more eager and vehement? Will not these Expressions melt a contentious Spirit into tears and agreement? Does it not wound our very Souls, when we meditate upon these piercing Words; and consider the Divisions, the scandalous and unchristian Divisions, that are amongst us? Such strong Cryings and Tears, methinks, should break our very hearts: For what can be more powerfully moving, than the last Prayers and Groans of a dying Savior? And yet the Schismatic offers that inhuman, that more than barbarous Cruelty to Christ, which he with so much ardency prayed against. He rends Christ's Church in pieces, and breaks that blessed Union, the want of which (unless a Miracle prevent it) threatens Christ's Mystical Body with utter destruction.

But tho' all Schism be in it self so utterly unlawful; yet almost every instance and kind of Schism has some peculiar aggravations. Those who usurp the Ministerial Office, or join with such Usurpers, do not only want Love, but become or assist the worst of Rebels. And to heighten their wickedness, they do either forge a Commission from Christ for this devilish End; or abet and stand by those that do so,

Again,

Again, Those who (tho' validly Ordained) do set up an opposite Party, or follow and adhere to such Party-makers; do either abuse their great Office to the mischief and desolation of Christ's Kingdom, which they are sworn to uphold; and to the advancement of Satan's Kingdom, which they are sworn to oppose and destroy; or else they become Parties in, and consent to such monstrous Sins.

But I need not enlarge. Gentlemen, you cannot but grant, that *Schism* is a most damnable sin in all circumstances whatsoever; because you must be supposed to have studied the Nature of it. However, for the sake of others, I shall Add a few Quotations: which, because they are enforced by the judgment and authority of above fourscore of your own greatest and ablest Divines (most of which Divines are still alive) will probably convince the unlearned Dissenters of the most damnable Nature of *Schism*.

CHAP. VII.

That Schism is a damnable sin, in the judgment of the present Dissenting Ministers.

YOU know, Gentlemen, that Mr. Mead was desired by above fourscore of the most celebrated Dissenting Ministers, of the Presbyterian and Independent Persuasions, to print a Sermon which he preached before them April 6. 1691. intitled, *Two Sticks made one, or The Excellency of Unity.*

Unity. And therefore the general Doctrine delivered in this Sermon must be thought the Doctrine of all those Ministers, and ought to be held in great esteem by all persons of the same persuasion with them.

Now in this Sermon we find the Author (and consequently, above fourscore Presbyterian and Independent Ministers) speaking thus concerning Schism. (a) *There is much cause of humbling upon this account; for the pride of our hearts, only by pride cometh contention; for the Dishonor done to God by these differences; for the reproach brought upon his ways; for the offences and scandals given to many, whereby their Souls have been eternally hazarded. And should not the sense of all this affect us?—O let us join in this one thing, to mourn together, till we have dissolved our hearts into tears, and see if they'll run into one another; and let us resolve that nothing shall comfort them, but peace with God, and peace with one another.* Now all this Humiliation and Mourning upon the account of Schism or Church-division, do's plainly suppose it to be extremely sinful in the sight of God.

But I shall be more particular; and prove, that according to Mr. Mead (that is, in the judgment of above fourscore Presbyterian and Independent Ministers) *Schism* is a most grievous and damnable sin, 1. From the Causes of Schism or Church-division. 2. From the Mischiefs arising from it. 3. From the manifold Condemnation of it in the Holy Scriptures.

First then, as to the Causes of Schism, Mr. Mead (b) says, *One is from the Malice of Satan. He is the*

(a) Two Sticks made one. Lond. 1691. p. 19.

(b) Ibid. p. 10.

envious one that sows these tares. He is the great In-
cendiary, that uses all arts to divide and separate the
People of God. Again he (a) tells us, that Divi-
sions spring from corrupt principles and lusts within.
What the Apostle saies of Worldly contentions, we may
say of Spiritual. Whence come wars and fightings
among you? come they not hence, even of your
Lusts, that war in your Members? James 4. 1.
There are some lusts especially, that make good men
a burden to each other; such as pride and vain-glory,
love of the World, ambition, and desire of precedency,
envy at anothers Repute, irregular Zeal, and such like.
And therefore Mr. Mead advises his Brethren
(b) thus, Labor to remove all the causes of Division.
Look back and see what roots our Discords sprang from.
Come they not hence, even of our Lusts? Whatever
you find to have been the cause of them, whether spi-
ritual Pride, or a contentious Disposition, or an af-
fectionation of Singularity, or error in Opinion, or Ad-
miracion of Mens Persons, or a sournest of Spirit, or an
ambition of drawing Disciples after us; Let the cause
be what it will, it must be removed, if you would have
your Union preserved. Now that which in the opi-
nion of your own Party comes thus from the De-
vil himself, and from those Lusts which are most
ugly and hateful in the sight of God, is certainly
extremely sinful.

Secondly, As for the Mischiefs of Schism,
Mr. Mead (c) tells us, that Division comes from Bit-
terness, and brings forth bitter fruits. The grapes
of it are grapes of gall, the clusters are bitter, Deut.
32. 32. For instance, their Divisions are very disho-
norable to Jesus Christ, they cause his Name to be

(a) Ibid. (b) Ibid. p. 28. (c) Ibid. p. 15.

blasphemed in the World, Rom. 2. 24. (a) What has been the reproach we have been filled with? is it not that we have been a divided People, crumbling into Factions and Parties, filled with mutual animosities and jars, envying and hating one another? (b) Nay, it is an implicit denying Christ to be come in the flesh. For when he comes, this is to be one effect of it, The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, &c. It is one argument the Jews have against Christ's being come, because this prophecy is not fulfilled. My brethren, is the Lord Christ come into the World, or is he not? If not; why do ye own it? If he is; why don't ye manifest it? It is your Union that must prove Christ's Mission. Christ prays for the oneness of his Disciples for this very end, John 17. 21. That they all may be one, that the World may believe, that thou hast sent me. As if Christ should say, The World will never believe that thou hast sent me, that my Doctrine is true, if they that profess it, live not in the power of it, and are not made one by it. Thou art love; and what shall convince the World, that I came out of the Bosom of the Father's love, when my Disciples hate one another? Oh, how dishonorable to Christ must this be?

(c) Divisions are the causes of much sin. (d) Division naturally runs into tumult and confusion.— Nothing more obstructs the flourishing of Religion. And how sad is it, that the interest and concerns of Christ should wither under our hands? Nothing becomes a greater stumbling-block to turn others out of the way of God. Division in the Church begets Atheism in the World. (e) How many have estranged themselves from Religion, and cast it off, because of the fends and heats of its Professors? — (f) Oh! how many

(a) Ibid. p. 19. (b) Ibid. p. 15. (c) Ibid. p. 16. (d) Ibid. p. 17. (e) Ibid. p. 21. (f) Ibid.

have fallen; and been turned out of the Way, by the fatal stumbling-blocks, which our Divisions have laid in the way of their conversion?

(a) Nothing becomes a greater joy to our Adversaries, nor gives them a greater advantage to undermine and destroy us. (b) Our contentions make us first a laughing-stock, than a prey to our enemies; and therefore they are a sad forerunner of ruin. Nay farther, (c) The Divisions that are among God's People, tho' they proceed from sin originally, yet there is a judicial Dispensation in them.—When God's People break with him, then he breaks them one against another. (d) Division is a scattering judgment.

These (saies (e) Mr. Mead) are some of the Many evils, which might be reckoned up, that are in the Divisions of God's People. And farther, speaking all this while to those Dissenting Teachers, who desired him to print this Sermon, he (f) saies, Brethren, what design God may have to honor you in making use of your Gifts, and Learning, and Zeal, for dethroning the Beast, and promoting the Kingdom of Christ, who can tell? But this I can tell (saies he) that it can never be done, but by a Spirit of love and union; and should we not labor to preserve it? I think it is impossible to charge any crime in the World with worse consequences, that those with which *Schism* stands charged by Mr. Mead, and consequently by above fourscore of your greatest Teachers. And what then can we think of *Schism*; which is the cursed parent of so many dreadful Mischiefs?

(a) Ibid. p. 17. (b) Ibid. p. 18. (c) Ibid. p. 11. (d) Ibid. p. 23. (e) Ibid. p. 18. (f) Ibid. p. 28.

Thirdly, I am now to shew out of the same Mr. Mead, that *Schism* is a most grievous and damnable sin, from the manifold Condemnation of it in the Holy Scriptures. Now that *Schism* is condemned in the Holy Scriptures, appears from what has been already said concerning the Mischiefs which it causes; for whatever causes such numberless and intolerable Mischiefs, is most certainly forbidden in the Word of God. But I shall be more particular.

1. Then, *There is nothing* (saies (a) Mr. Mead) *more contrary to Christianity; and yet we cover our Divisions under the cloak of Religion, the very name whereof carries Union with it.*—— As God is the God of peace, Christ the Prince of peace, the Holy Ghost the Spirit of peace, his Children, the Children of peace: so (saies he, speaking to the Presbyterian and Independent Ministers) *the Gospel you profess and preach, is the Gospel of peace, full of precepts of peace. You are, if it be possible, and as much as in you lies, to live peaceably with all men, Rom. 12. 18. much more to have peace one with another, Mark 9. 50. Else you violate your baptismal Covenant, for by one Spirit we are all baptized in one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, 1 Cor. 12. 13. And what an evil is this violation of your baptismal Covenant by Division?*

2. (b) *Divisions are against Love, as Error is against Faith: it cuts asunder the bond of Peace.*

3. (c) *Divisions are the fruits of the Flesh. The Apostle tells us, The fruits of the Spirit are Love, Peace, Gentleness and Meekness, Gal. 5. 22. but the fruits of the Flesh are Hatred, Variance, Emulation,*

(a) Ibid. p. 16. (b) Ibid. p. 17. (c) Ibid.

Strife and Envyings, *verse 20.* so that a man cannot evidence himself to be in the flesh, and destitute of the Spirit of God, in any thing more than by a contentious dividing Spirit. The Apostle saies so, 1 Cor. 3. 3. If there be envyings, and strifes, and divisions among you, are ye not carnal? They are Salamanders, that can live only in this fire. And then I may ask, but who is their father? for the Wisdom that is from beneath, is sensual and devilish, the Mother of strife and division. But the Wisdom that is from above, is pure and peaceable, James 3. 15, 17. Oh! how sad is it, when the flesh thus reigns in the Children of the Spirit?

4. (a) Divisions are a great grief to the Spirit of God, and we are commanded not to grieve him, Ephes. 4. 30. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God.

5. Divisions are directly contrary to that Union which all Christians are obliged to maintain. How many Unities (saies (b) Mr. Mead) does the Apostle urge, as Arguments for the Maintaining this Unity? All things in Religion are reduced to one, that the people of God may be one, and abide one. Eph. 4. 4. There is one Body, and one Spirit, one Hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. How many ones are here to move the people of God to be one? (c) How monstrous is it for the Members of the same Body to fight one against another, to rend and tear one another, &c.?—All the Members of the Mystical Body of Christ have one and the same Spirit—Why then should they not have one heart and one way, when they are taught and led by one Spirit?—There is one Lord, and that is the

(a) Ibid. p. 15. (b) Ibid. p. 24. (c) Ibid. p. 25.

Lord Christ, whom we all worship and serve. And shall fellow-servants differ, that have the same Lord? — If there be but one Faith, why should we not be united therein in one judgment? — Shall we by our discords unbaptize our selves, by dividing from that Body, into which we were baptized? (a) Shall not we be one, that have one God? shall he be over us, and through us, and in us; and should not this be an argument to preserve Union among us?

6. Divisions do frustrate the ends of all Christ's Undertakings. Mr. Mead (b) saies, *It was one end of his coming into the World, that in the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, Ephes. 1. 10. It was one end of his Ministry, and therefore he doth so frequently inculcate it. These things I command you, that ye love one another, John 15. 17. And John 13. 34, 35. It was much the matter of his prayer for believers, that they all may be one. He urges it again and again, no less than four times in three verses, John 17. 21, 22, 23. It was one end of his death to gather together in one the Children of God, that are scattered abroad, John 11. 50. See Ephes. 2. 14, 15, 16. It was one end of his ascension, and pouring out of his Spirit. It was not only to unite us to God, but to one another. He is the great uniting principle; therefore the Oneness of Believers is called the Unity of the Spirit. You see how much the heart of Christ was set upon this Oneness among his People. Is this no Motive?*

But Mr. Mead urges farther, (c) saying, *This is an evident badge, a manifest character of our discipleship to Christ, John 13. 35. By this shall all men*

(a) Ibid. p. 26. (b) Ibid. (c) Ibid.

know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another. But if ye do not, whose Disciples will ye be known to be then? The same Author speaks thus to those Dissenting Ministers, who requested that his Sermon might be printed. (a) *Indeavor what in you lies to perfect this Union. Nothing less than this will fully answer the prayer of Christ. He doth not only pray that his People may be made one, but that they may be made perfect in one, Joh. 17. 23. And if Christ praies for it, ought not we to endeavor it; that we may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, 1 Cor. 1. 10.?*

Gentlemen, I do not believe, that you can name any one sin; that is blacker than *Schism*, if what I have quoted out of Mr. *Mead*, and is confirmed by above fourscore Presbyterian and Independent Ministers, be just and true. If you think them mistaken in their opinion of *Schism*; I pray convince them of their Error, and make an Apology for that, which they have loaded with the charge of such detestable Impiety in so many respects. But if what they think of *Schism*, be right (as I verily believe you think it is) then surely the sin of *Schism* is damnable to the last degree.

You'll easily excuse my transcribing so much of this Sermon; because, tho' I did not think it necessary for your own conviction, yet I thought it necessary for the conviction of others, who seem to despise *Schism*, as a small Sin, or none at all. Whereas Mr. *Baxter* has truly (b) observed, that *Church-division is a heap of Sins*; and I know (saies

(a) Ibid. p. 31.

(b) *Cure of Church-divis. pref. p. 6. Lond. 1670.*

(a) he) that dividing principles and positions (and much more surely dividing practices) do tend directly to the ruin and damnation of those, in whom they do prevail.

Oh, that some persons, who seem zealous for Religion, would consider what is said by the same Mr. Baxter in another (b) place. Whence is it (saies he) but for want of Self-denyal, that Men that know that Whoredom, and Drunkenness, and Theft are sins, can be ignorant in the midst of light, that Discord and Church-Divisions are sins? And that they hear him with hearts-rising, enmity or suspicion, that doth declaim against them? As if Uniting were become the work of Satan, and Dividing were become the work of Christ. And in another place he (c) saies, that A true Christian, that hateth Fornication, Drunkenness, Lying, Perjury, because they are forbidden in the Word of God; will hate Divisions also, when he well observeth, how frequently and vehemently they are forbidden, and Concord highly commended and commanded.

(a) Ibid. p. 11.

(b) Treatise of Self-denyal, Epist. Mon. 1659. as 'tis quoted by Mr. Burseough, of Schism, p. 61.

(c) Christian Directory, Lond. 1673. p. 737.

C H A P. VIII.

That there is a Schism between the Established Church of England, and the Dissenters, First, because there are amongst us many persons, who usurp the Office of Clergy-men.

THIRDLY, I must now prove, that there is a *Schism* between the Established Church of England, and the Dissenters. Gentlemen, I shall by no means join you with the *Anabaptists*, and all that rabble of wild *Enthusiasts*, which are utterly condemned both by us and your own Party. That there is a *Schism* between us and them; and that they are also Schismatics from your selves, and from all the sober part of the Christian World besides, I am persuaded, you will readily acknowledge. But the Question at present depending between us, is this, Whether there be a *Schism* between the Established Church of England and your selves, who (of all the Modern Separatists) do come nearest to her. And for the Determination of this point, it will be necessary to consider, whether one of those Cases already put, be not exactly ours.

First then, I have shewn, and your own Party do grant, that there is a *Schism* in the Church, when those who are not legally commissioned by Christ, the supreme Head of the Church, do usurp the Office of Clergymen, and exercise Spiritual Jurisdiction over the Layety. Now whether there are not many such Pastors amongst us; such I mean, as have no sufficient and valid Ordination, and consequently no Commission from Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel,

Gospel, is a point well worth our most serious thoughts.

Gentlemen, you cannot, and will not say, that those who are Ordained by the Bishops of the Established Church, are not sufficiently Ordained: and consequently you acknowledge, that those who are Ordained by our Bishops, are most certainly empowered to preach the Gospel, and are true Ministers of Jesus Christ. But whether those, who never were Ordained by Bishops, have any valid Ordination to the Ministry, is next to be considered.

I need not tell you, what Books have been both formerly and lately written to prove the Divine Right of Bishops, as an Order distinct from Presbyters or Priests, and superior to them; and as the only Church-Governors intrusted by God with a power of Ordination. If the Doctrine pleaded and contended for by these Writers, is to be received for truth, as I verily believe it must; then all those persons, who were never Ordained by Bishops, have no valid Ordination. And consequently those persons do usurp the Ministerial Office; and both they themselves, and those that adhere to them, are grievous Schismatics by the confession of your own Party, as I have already proved,

C H A P. IX.

Of the Necessity of Episcopal Ordination.

BUT, because the Controversies concerning the Divine Right of Bishops, as an Order superior to that of Priests, and their sole power of Ordination, are so full of Learning and Intricacy, that those persons for whose satisfaction I publish these Papers, cannot be esteemed competent Judges of them; therefore I shall not enter upon the detail of those Matters: but endeavor to shorten and clear this Dispute concerning the Validity of Ordination by Presbyters without Bishops, by making a Supposition, which I believe all impartial Judges will account extremely favorable to your own Cause. And yet I hope to prove, that Ordinations without Bishops are utterly null and void notwithstanding.

Suppose we then, *First*, that *Augustus Caesar*, or any other *Roman* Emperor, had made a Law, whereby he established only one sort of Civil Government in all parts of his Empire; and that this Government was to be administered only by such Persons, as were duly commissioned according to the direction of this one Universal Law. *Secondly*, That by virtue of this Law none should be accounted Magistrates, but such as were appointed by those who were already Magistrates themselves. *Thirdly*, That out of the Magistrates appointed in each District, one was by this Law alwaies to be chosen among themselves, who was not indeed in Order superior to the rest, but was notwithstanding alwaies counted a President, Moderator or Chair-

man in their Debates, and other matters of Government. *Fourthly*, That this kind of Government had continued (tho' perhaps with some little alterations) in all parts of the Empire for many hundreds of years together; and that in all this great space of time the practice was constantly such, that none was ever held and accounted a Magistrate, unless he was chosen, not only by a competent Number of the Magistrates already in Office, but with the Consent and Concurrence of the President, Moderator or Chairman in particular.

These things being supposed, Let us now put the case, that in process of time a Man was chosen Magistrate by one or more of the present Magistrates, without and against the President's consent and concurrence. I appeal to your own consciences, Gentlemen, whether you would account a Person thus chosen to be a true Magistrate, duly commissioned and authorised; when by perpetual practice it appears, that for many hundreds of years no such Election ever happened, but it was declared null and void; and it cannot be proved, that any one Person so elected, was ever esteemed a Magistrate.

Let us now draw a parallel between this case, and that of Presbyters ordaining without a Bishop.

1. You grant, That Jesus Christ has made a Law, whereby he has established only one sort of Spiritual Government in all parts of the Church, which is his Spiritual Kingdom; and that his Spiritual Government is to be administered by such Persons only, as are duly commissioned by Ordination, according to the Direction of this universal Law.

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2. You grant, that by Virtue of Christ's Law none are to be accounted Spiritual Magistrates or Clergymen, but such as are ordained by those who are already Clergymen themselves.

3. You can deny, but that out of the Clergy of each District, one was alwaies chosen amongst themselves, who, tho' it be granted that he was not in order superior to the rest, was notwithstanding alwaies accounted a President, Moderator or Chairman in the Debates of the Clergy, and other matters of their Government. This Person I call a Bishop; and that there were such Bishops in every part of the Christian Church, is evident past all possibility of contradiction.

You know, that the greatest asserters of Presbytery do grant, that there were such Bishops in the Second Century. And therefore, since your own Party do acknowledge, that the word *Bishop*, when apply'd to Persons living in the second Century, was so used by the very best Ecclesiastical Writers; 'tis plain, that there were such Bishops in the First Century also. Because the very same Writers in the very same places, do speak of Bishops in the very same sense, in the first, as in the second Century. And if there were such Bishops in the very first Century, 'tis plain that they were appointed by the Apostles themselves; unless we can imagin that all the whole Christian Church in all the parts of the World, would pretend to set up a sort of Men amongst themselves, in the life-time, and before the very faces of the Apostles, without the Apostles own direction.

Whether the same Ecclesiastical Writers, and all others in the succeeding Ages, who speak of Bishops as Presidents over the Priests, did not also think those Bishops an Order superior to that of Priests;

Priests; I shall not now dispute. For my own part, I confess, I think it plain they did: but because, I suppose, you will not acknowledge it, therefore at present I assert no more, than what your selves and all Mankind must of Necessity allow, *viz.* that altho' the words *Bishop* and *Presbyter*, or *Priest*, did not denote different Persons, and Offices wholly distinct, but the very same both Persons and Offices; yet notwithstanding, from the Apostles own times, and by their own appointment, one was alwaies Chosen out of the Presbyters or Bishops, who presided in all Debates and Matters of Government, and was accounted chief Presbyter or Bishop, and called *THE* Presbyter or Bishop (*αὐτὸς ἡγεμὼν*. as we say, or) in a peculiar and emphatical manner.

4. It must be granted also, that this one sort of Spiritual Government instituted at first by Christ, did continue in the Church (tho' perhaps with some little alterations) for many hundreds of years. For, tho' we are agreed, that when the Bishop of *Rome* began to Lord it over some other parts of the Christian World, there was then a considerable change wrought: yet in all the vast space of time before, in all those best and purest Ages of the Church, wherein Christ's own Government was preserved, the practice was constantly such, that none was ever thought validly ordained, unless he were ordained by Imposition of the Hands of that Person in particular, who was *The Bishop* or chief Presbyter, or Moderator, or whatsoever other title you'll be pleased to give him.

Whether Imposition of the Hands of Divers Presbyters be requisite in Ordination, or no; it is at present not necessary to determin. This is most evident, that Imposition of the Bishop's, or
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the chief Presbyter's Hands, was alwaies thought necessary; and that none used to be Ordained without it. 'Tis true, a Presbyter has in ancient times presum'd to Ordain without a Bishop, but the Church never esteem'd the Orders conferr'd by him to be valid. And I do earnestly request you, Gentlemen, if you think otherwise, to give me one single Instance in any of the first Ages, of a Man who was Ordained without the Imposition of that Person's Hands, whom we call the Bishop, or chief Presbyter, or President of the Priests; I say, give me one Instance, if you can, of a Man that was so Ordain'd, and whose Orders were then esteem'd valid by the Church of Christ.

Here then you may observe, that I wave the more disputable points, by not arguing for the Divine Right of Bishops as a superior Order to that of Priests, and by not saying, that all Priests have not a power of Ordaining. These things, you perceive, I do not now insist upon. But this I affirm, that tho' Bishops were not a superior Order to that of Priests, and tho' all Priests have a power of Ordaining; yet I say, that no Priests have power of Ordaining without the concurrence of that Priest in particular, whom we call the first or chief Presbyter, or Bishop, or the President, Moderator, or Chair-man of the whole number of Priests of that District. Their power of Ordination is then only unquestionable, when they act in conjunction with the chief Presbyter or Bishop: and if they act otherwise, if they presume to Ordain without his concurrence; then they act out of their sphere, and beyond their power, and their Ordination signifies nothing.

Let me illustrate this with a familiar Example. No Man doubts, but that all Her Majesty's Justices of
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the Peace have power in many cases to act separately, each Justice by himself, without exceeding their Commission. In other cases two Justices are required; and one single Justice cannot act alone. But then there are certain Justices of the *Quorum* too, whose concurrence in particular is requir'd in some cases; and in those cases, all the other Justices, how great a number soever there be of them, cannot act without the actual concurrence of one Justice of the *Quorum* at least. And if any number of Justices of the Peace, tho' most legally Commissioned by her Majesty, do presume to act in such cases without the concurrence of one of the *Quorum*; their Action is null and void in Law, even as void, as if it had been done by persons wholly out of Commission. And accordingly, tho' it be granted, that Bishops and Presbyters are of the same Order, as much as Justices of the Peace are all of the same Order; and tho' it be granted, that the Names *Bishop* and *Presbyter* do belong equally to them all, as the name of a Justice belongs to all Justices of the Peace: yet I say, there are some things, which other Presbyters cannot do without the concurrence of the chief Presbyter or Bishop; and particularly, a number of Presbyters (how great soever that number be) cannot Ordain without the concurrence of the chief Presbyter or Bishop. And if a number of Presbyters do presume to Ordain without the Bishop's consent and concurrence; their Ordinations are utterly null and void.

This was alwaies believ'd and acknowledg'd by the ancient Fathers in the first and purest Ages of the Church; and if you will not grant it (as I think, you must and ought) then I desire you to disprove it by any one clear Text, or by any one clear Instance to the contrary since the foundation of Christianity

stianity to the end of the first six hundred years. I might fix the period much lower, I confess; but you know, that Corruptions flow'd in so fast in the following Centuries, that their judgment and practice cannot be thought of moment by either of us.

These things, Gentlemen, being premis'd, and (as I hope) thoroughly consider'd by you; let us now put the case, that in process of time a Man was Ordain'd by some Presbyters without and against the consent, concurrence or assistance of their Bishop or chief Presbyter. In this case, I say, (and the primitive Church in all parts of the World said so too) that the Orders so conferred are utterly null and void. And consequently here in *England*, all persons so Ordain'd, *without and against the will of the chief Presbyter or Bishop, have no valid Orders.*

C H A P. X.

The Case of some foreign Protestant Churches, which want Episcopal Ordination, consider'd.

BUT 'twill be objected, that this principle do's unchurch some Protestant Churches beyond the Seas; and make all their Ordinations null and void: because they have no Bishops, and consequently no true Pastors amongst them. To this I answer, That there is a vastly great difference between the case of those foreign Reform'd Churches, and that of those *English* Pastors, who want Episcopal Ordination.

You

You know, that at the time of the Reformation, the Lay-Protestants in *France*, and some few other Countries, could not possibly join with the Clergy of those Countries in the public Worship of God, without being guilty of Idolatry, and other Crimes. But both the Clergy and Layety, that would not bear a part in those Corruptions, were utterly excluded from all Divine Service; and they could not comply with the terms of Admission, without hazarding their eternal Salvation. In this case what could they do? There was a very great Body of Men left in a manner destitute of all public practice of Religion. But surely 'twas unreasonable and utterly unfit, that so great a number of People should live without any public Worship of God. Wherefore, having some few Priests amongst them that were duly ordain'd, they were forc'd to make others as well as they could. And since all could not be under the inspection of persons duly Ordain'd; 'twas fit, that part of them should be content with such as they could get, and receive instruction from Pastors of their own making, rather than from none at all.

Had it been possible for the Layety to have join'd with Pastors duly Ordain'd, without being guilty of damnable Sin; then they ought not to have follow'd such as were not duly Ordain'd. But, as I said before, unless the Layety would close with *Papery*, which is abominably sinful, all of them could not be admitted to join with Pastors duly Ordain'd, and therefore those persons must be directed and instructed by others. And since they could not have a succession of Clergy, otherwise than by that Ordination, which they were constrain'd to admit in their first necessity; therefore they were oblig'd to continue and supply the number of their Priests,

as they had already begun. And we have good reason to believe, that a gracious and merciful God, who do's not expect Brick without Straw, will be pleas'd to accept of their honest endeavors, and be satisfy'd with what they were able to do; because in their most unhappy Circumstances it was impossible for them to act better. They could not proceed exactly according to that Rule which God had laid down, and which had ever been follow'd in all Ages of the Christian Church, before their grievous Calamity came upon them, and forc'd them unwillingly to begin a deviation from it.

C H A P. XI.

The vast difference between the case of those foreign Protestant Churches, which want Episcopal Ordination, and those English Pastors, who want it, briefly shewn.

BUT in *England* the case is vastly different. You your selves cannot deny; and I shall afterwards prove it out of your own Writers; and by the daily practice of your own Party, both Pastors and People: I say, you cannot deny, but that 'tis possible for the Layety here in *England*, to joyn with the Episcopal Clergy without any sin at all. We have not so much as one unlawful Term of Lay-Communion with us. And therefore there is not the least reason to expect, that God will allow of Ordination without Bishops here in *England*, tho' he will (we hope) in some other Protestant Countries.

For, *First*, in those Countries no person, whether of the Clergy or Layety, can have any Communion with the Episcopal Church, without danger of Damnation, by the practice of *Popery*: whereas in *England* all persons whatsoever may have constant Communion with the Episcopal Church, without any such danger. *Secondly*, In those Countries no Man can have Episcopal Ordination, without the practice of Idolatry; and consequently no succession of Episcopal Clergy can be continued amongst the Protestants, without making persons Idolaters, and guilty of many other Abominations, as the indispensable Conditions of their Ordination: whereas in *England* all persons duly qualify'd may receive Episcopal Ordination, without any unlawful practice or condition at all; and consequently we can enjoy a perpetual succession of Episcopal Clergy, without any sinful submission, either of the Clergy or Layety.

'Tis said indeed, that a Man cannot be Ordained by our Bishops, without subscribing, &c. And where, I pray, is the sin of subscribing? But, say they, some godly Men cannot comply with those Subscriptions, which our Laws and Bishops require. And what then? is there an absolute necessity, that those godly Men, as they are called, must be Ordained? Cannot the Church subsist, unless they in particular do become Clergymen? If they cannot subscribe, and be Ordained; they may continue Laymen without any Subscription. And surely 'tis unreasonable, that the Established Laws should be broken, whensoever this or that godly Man desires it. If his Conscience be against Subscription, let him sit down contented without Ordination. For 'tis utterly unfit, that the settled

Rules

Rules of Government should be broken for the humor of every one, that is called a godly Person. The Church may be abundantly supplied with pious and learned Clergymen, that do and will readily subscribe, &c. tho' such persons as scruple Subscription, &c. be never Ordained. And why then must God's established Rule of Ordination by Bishops be broken, to please the fancy of some who scruple Subscription, tho' without Subscription they cannot receive Episcopal Ordination?

In a word, in those foreign Countries, which I have been speaking of, no Person whatsoever can receive Episcopal Ordination, without manifest sin; nor can Lay-persons join with the Episcopal Clergy without manifest sin: and consequently both Clergymen and Laymen must either be wholly driven from all public Worship of God, or necessarily sin; unless Ordination without Bishops be admitted. Whereas in *England*, 'tis notorious, that we can constantly have a great plenty of Clergymen Episcopally Ordained, without any sin on their part; and the Layety can constantly join in God's public Worship with Episcopal Clergymen, without any sin on their part: and consequently the Rule of Episcopal Ordination may be perpetually observed amongst us, without any sin, either in the Clergy or the Layety. And therefore, tho' we have good reason to hope, that God will dispense with the ordinary necessity of Episcopal Ordination, when it cannot be obtained without sin, both in the Clergy and the Layety: yet we have no reason to think, that God will in any wise dispense with the ordinary necessity of Episcopal Ordination here in *England*, where it is still preserved, and may be for ever retained, with-

out any the least sin, either in the Clergy or the Layety.

I shall only beg leave to add some words of Dr. Maurice, who well (a) observes, That the Ordination of our Dissenters is peculiar; and they do foreign Churches great wrong, when they concern them in their quarrels. For First, your Independents have no root of Orders, but their Pastors are of Lay original extraction. The Presbyterians have Ordination from Presbyters; not only without, but in opposition to Bishops, against the established Rules of this Church, against the Laws of the Country, as well as practice of ancient Churches. And if upon this account we pronounce them void, we do no more than what all the Protestant Churches abroad would do in the like case. If some Deacons or Laymen would take upon them to ordain Pastors in the French Churches, for Separate Congregations, in opposition to the received Discipline professed in their General Synods; I would appeal to any Minister of those Churches, whether he held such an Ordination valid. And yet by the Principles of those Churches Laymen may confer Orders in some cases; as appears (b) by the first Ordination in Paris, where there was no Presbyter present; and by the confession of Beza, in the Conference at (c) Poissy. Nay, tho' a Presbyter deposed by their Synod, should take upon him to Ordain; I still appeal to the Ministers of those Churches, Whether they would account such an Ordination valid. If we therefore do judge such Ordinations here to be Nullities, because administred by Subordinate Officers, against the Laws

(a) Defence of Diocesan Episcopacy, Lond. 1700. p. 452.
453 (b) Hist. Eccles. T.I. l. 2. (c) Hist. Eccles. T.I. l. 4.

of the Church, in opposition to their Superiors, and against the Practice and Discipline of the Primitive Christians, we cannot be thought singular in this judgment: since all ancient Churches would have done the same thing, and all the Protestant Churches in Europe, in the like case, would follow our Example.

Those Persons therefore, who plead for Ordination by *Presbyters* without Bishops here in *England*, are desired to shew, that their case is the same with that of the foreign Churches: and then we shall be heartily willing to make the same favorable construction of it.

From what has been said, I hope, it plainly appears, that our asserting the necessity of Episcopal Ordination, where it may be had, do's not prove, that those are no Churches which have it not; because 'tis not possible for them to have it. And therefore the necessity of Episcopal Ordination, where it may be had, remains apparently manifest. And consequently, if any Pastors in *England* were Ordained without Bishops, they were not validly Ordained.

And since 'tis notorious, that there are many such Pastors amongst your selves, it is plain, that those Pastors are not Ministers of *Jesus Christ*; but they usurp the Office of Clergymen, and exercise a Spiritual Jurisdiction over the Layety without any Commission from above. Wherefore, both those Pastors are Schismatics themselves; and all those People that follow them are Schismatics also, by your own confession, and upon your own Principles. This, Gentlemen, I take to be one substantial proof that there is a Schism between the Established Church, and your selves.

C H A P. XII.

That there is a Schism between the Established Church of England, and the Dissenters, Secondly, because on one side or other there is an Opposition of the people to their proper Ministers.

SEcondly, Tho' it were granted, that all the Pastors both of ours, and of your own Party, are validly Ordained; and consequently are true Ministers of *Jesus Christ*: yet I shall now prove, that there is a *Schism* notwithstanding between the Established Church of *England*, and your selves.

For I have already shewn, and your own Writers do grant, That there is a *Schism* in the Church, when the Layety do refuse subjection to their proper Ministers, and adhere to others, in opposition to them. Now 'tis notorious, that this is our case. There are in *England* distinct Sets of Clergymen, some Episcopal, others Presbyterian, or Independent; and all these Clergymen do pretend to derive their Authority from *Christ*, and to be *Christ's* Ambassadors; and they do all exercise the same Functions, and the People join themselves in public Worship, and apply themselves for Instruction, to those whose Persons, or Gifts, or Ways they like best, or whom they think the most rightly constituted Clergy. Now these Sets of Clergymen are of opposite parties; and one claims the Flock which the other feeds; and consequently all these Clergymen cannot be the proper Ministers of the People. And since all these Sets of Clergymen cannot be the proper Ministers of the People; therefore on
one

one side or other, there is an Opposition of the People to their proper Ministers; and consequently there is a *Schism* between us and your selves.

C H A P. XIII.

That there is a Schism between the Established Church of England, and the Dissenters, Thirdly, because we are divided into opposite Parties, &c.

T*Hirdly*, Tho' it were granted, that all your Pastors, as well as ours, are validly Ordained; and that your Pastors as well as ours, are the proper Ministers of the People; and that there is not amongst us any the least Opposition of the People to their proper Ministers; I say, tho' all this were granted, yet there is a *Schism* between the Established Church and your selves notwithstanding.

For 'tis notorious, that these parties of Clergymen amongst us do use different and opposite waies of Worship; and that the Layety do join some in one, and some in the other way. 'Tis notorious also, that both the Clergy and the Layety of these opposite parties do mutually condemn each others way; and endeavor to gain Profelytes from one another; and strive to increase and strengthen their several parties. 'Tis notorious also, that those Spiritual Contests do cause many and great heart-burnings; and have wrought numberless mischiefs; and endanger'd the ruin of the *Protestant* Religion amongst us, by bringing in *Popery*; and have

occasion'd the birth and growth of numberless, wild and cursed Opinions, utterly destructive to Christianity. 'Tis notorious also, that these Ecclesiastical Feuds do infect all the concerns of Civil Government, and cause great disturbances in all Elections, and infinite other disorders which I need not mention, because (God knows) they are too visible. I appeal to your own Consciences, Gentlemen, whether these Matters of Fact be not true; and evident amongst us every day. And tell me then plainly, whether such proceedings are in any wise consistent with that Union, about Church-Matters especially, and the Worship of God, which ought to be practis'd by all Christians,

We are told by Mr. *Mead*, and consequently (as I have often said) by above fourscore of your greatest and best Divines, that (a) *When we live and act, as they that have but one essence and interest, this makes the Union manifest, and shews that we are in a sense one, as God and Christ are one.* And consequently, when we live and act as they that have different, nay, quite contrary and opposite Essences and Interests; this makes the Division or *Schism* manifest: and shews that we are not in any sense one, as God and Christ are one. And can we then be said to be at Unity? Is there not a grievous *Schism* amongst us, who have such different Methods of serving God; and do mutually dislike, condemn and oppose each others way? Alas! the breach is evident and notorious. 'Tis impossible for any Man, whose eyes are open, to deny it.

Mr. *Mead*, speaking of that Union of God's name, which we are all obliged to endeavor after

(a) Two Sticks made one, p. 24.

under the Gospel-Dispensation, quotes *Zech. 13. 19.* *In that day the Lord shall be one, and his name one.* But, saies (b) he, *Is not his name one now? Yea, in it self it is.* He is the God of Truth, that is his name. But while there are different ways of Profession, and each Party intitles God to his particular way; this gives him many names. The differing claims that divided Interests make to God, give him many names. But in that day his Name shall be one; Differing ways and modes of worship shall cease, all his People shall be united in the same mind and judgment, and shall own God in the same truth, and the same way of worship, and so shall his name be one. This Unity of Worship is what Mr. Mead presseth upon his Auditors, as one part of that Union, Which (saies (c) he) is so great a Duty upon all the Churches, and which I shall afterwards prove more largely out of Mr. Mead, and others, to be extremely necessary, where it may be obtain'd. And do those of the Establish'd Church, and those of your Party, practise this Unity of Worship? You very well know, that the way of Worship it self is the great Bone of Contention, the main ground of our unhappy Quarrels. And surely then there is a most grievous Schism between us.

'Twas accounted a Schism by St. Paul, when the *Corinthians* disagreed about their Ministers Persons, tho' they at the same time agreed, both in the same Doctrine, and in the same way of Worship. They (saies Mr. (d) Mead) were for preferring one Minister to the contempt of another. One was for Paul against Apollo, another for Apollo against Paul, a third for Peter against them

(b) Ibid. p. 13. (c) Ibid. p. 27. (d) Ibid. p. 29.

both, &c. But would to God we could say, this is the worst of our case. The Apostle assures us, that even this is Schismatical; and how great a *Schism* then is there between our selves and you?

Besides, you know, there was a very great *Schism* between the *Presbyterians* and the *Independents* in the year 1691. and that a solemn Fast was then appointed by both Parties for healing the *Schism*. And is there not a far greater difference between us and you, than there was at that time between your selves? If therefore there was at that time so great a *Schism* between your selves, as your own Party do confess, and did solemnly bewail; then there is most certainly a grievous *Schism* between us and you.

Nay, since that Union of the *Presbyterians* and *Independents* in the year 1691. the *Schism* is broken out a-fresh upon them. Many of your principal Pastors, *viz.* Dr. Bates, Mr. Sclater, Mr. How, Mr. Alsop, Mr. Stretton, Mr. Burgess, and Mr. Shower, (e) tell us that the rupture of that Union is such as *has been too notorious, and what they had rather lament and heal, than represent, and aggravate the sinfulness, and pernicious consequences of it.* And if the present *Schism* between the *Presbyterians* and *Independents* be so notorious, and sinful, and of such pernicious consequence; surely the *Schism* between us and your selves, is infinitely more notorious, and sinful, and has many more pernicious consequences attending it.

Suppose an Infidel, who knew how often, and how strictly our Savior had enjoined his Disciples to be one, to love one another, and to live in perfect peace together; I say I suppose an Infidel,

(e) Hist. of Union, Lond. 1698. p. 23.

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who knew all this, should come into *England*, and see the Parties that are amongst us, and observe our differences about the Method and Manner of serving God. Would such an Infidel think that we practise Peace and Unity, as Christ requires of us? No; doubtless he would say, that we contradict our Savior's Rule; and that on one side or other there is utterly a fault amongst us. And indeed we may as well pretend, that two Armies in the heat of Battel are perfect Friends; as that the Parties amongst us do hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit and in the Bond of Peace. Certainly one Party or other must, and do's want the Spirit of Truth, Unity and Concord; when 'tis so evident, that those who live together in the same place, and do all confess God's Holy Name, and agree in the truth of his Holy Word; do so shamefully quarrel about his Worship, and live without Unity, and Godly Love.

C H A P. XIV.

A Summary of what has been said to prove that there is a Schism between the Established Church of England, and the Dissenters.

I Shall now sum up in a few words, what has been said concerning this particular.

First, I have proved, that there are many pretended Ministers of Jesus Christ amongst us, who have no valid Ordination, and consequently no Commission to preach the Gospel; and therefore 'tis

'tis plain, that there is a *Schism* between the Establish'd Church of *England* and your selves.

Secondly, Tho' it were granted against all Reason, that there are no such pretended Ministers amongst us, but that all the Pastors both of our Party and your own, are validly Ordain'd; yet I have prov'd, that there are opposite Sets or Parties of Ministers amongst us; and that the Layety in following some one Party, and some another, do most certainly, on one side or other, oppose their proper Ministers; and therefore 'tis plain, that there is a *Schism* between the Establish'd Church of *England* and your selves.

Thirdly, Tho' it were granted against all Reason, that all your Ministers, as well as ours, are validly Ordain'd; and tho' it were also granted against all Reason, that there is not amongst us any the least opposition of the People to their proper Ministers; but that both the Ministers of the Establish'd Church, and those of your Party, are the proper Ministers of the People; I say, tho' all this were granted, yet there is a *Schism* between us notwithstanding. For I have prov'd, that the Layety, being headed and led on by their suppos'd proper Ministers, partly of our own, and partly of your Party; I say, the Layety, thus headed and led on, are divided into Parties, mutually condemning each other, practising opposite waies of Worship, opposing each others Interest, endeavoring to gain Profelytes from each other; and in a word, openly quarreling with each other upon the account of Spiritual Matters; and therefore 'tis plain, that there is a *Schism* between the Establish'd Church of *England*, and your selves, who (of all the Modern Separatists) do come nearest to her.

CHAP. XV.

On which side this Schism must be charged.

Fourthly, It being now evident, that there is a *Schism* between the Established Church of *England*, and your selves; the Grand Question still remaining, is, At whose door the guilt of this *Schism* lies.

Schism (as we learn from the Teachers of your own Party) is a sin of the blackest nature, and the deepest die. 'Tis that which is utterly inconsistent with Christianity; and not only a bar to our entrance into Heaven, but that which will most assuredly destroy our Souls in Hell-flames. 'Tis no wonder therefore, that both parties are willing to wipe off the stain of *Schism* from themselves. But since the sin is most certainly committed on one side or other, since either our selves, or your selves are infallibly guilty of it; certainly it behoves both us and you to examin our several Consciences and Actions, fairly and impartially, that those who shall find themselves faulty in this particular, may repent of their impiety, lest they fall into condemnation for it.

Well then; since it appears, that either we of the Church of *England*, or those of your Persuasion, are most certainly *Schismatics*; Let us now consider seriously, whether the *Schism* is to be charged on our own, or on your side.

Now this Controversy cannot be decided, unless it be first known, Whether the Established Church of *England* do's impose any unlawful terms of Lay-Communion. For we readily grant, that if the Established Church of *England* do's impose any one unlawful

lawful Term of Lay-Communion with her; then we of the Establish'd Church are guilty of the *Schism*. But then if it appear, that the Establish'd Church do's not impose any one unlawful term of Lay-Communion with her; then I am sure, the guilt of the *Schism* will fall to your share. Wherefore, before I proceed any farther, I shall endeavor to determin this Fundamental Point.

C H A P. XVI.

That the Terms of Lay-Communion with the Establish'd Church of England, are lawful.

I Need not inform you, Gentlemen, of the great difference between Clergy-Communion and Lay-Communion. Only for the sake of others, I beg leave briefly to explain these Terms.

By Clergy-Communion, we understand that which the Establish'd Church of *England* requires of her Clergymen. By Lay-Communion, we understand what she requires of Lay-persons. Now the Establish'd Church requires her Clergymen, to subscribe the Thirty nine Articles, &c. to perform Divine Service, and administer the Sacraments, according to the prescribed Liturgy; and to do all the other Duties appertaining to their Pastoral Office. But she requires nothing more of her Layety, but to join with her Clergy in the public Worship of God, according to the prescribed Liturgy, and to obey their godly Directions concerning Spiritual Matters. The Question therefore is, Whether these things, *viz.* joining with the Church-Clergy in the use of the Liturgy, and obeying their godly Directions concerning Spiritual Matters, be Lawful, or no.

That

That we, the Ministers of the Established Church, are validly Ordained, is readily acknowledged by your selves; and therefore it cannot be pretended, that the Layety are to account us Usurpers of the Ministerial Office, and to avoid joining with us for that reason. Nor can it be doubted, but that it is lawful for the Layety to obey the godly Directions of the Church of England Ministers concerning Spiritual Matters. The only Question therefore is, whether it be lawful for Lay-persons to join with the Clergy of the Established Church, in the use of the Liturgy. Now that it is lawful for them to bear their part in the use of the Liturgy, do's plainly appear from the Writings and Actions of your own Party. For,

1. 'Tis granted by your own Divines, that the use of Forms of Prayer is very lawful. Your own Mr. Boyse (a) saies, *I grant praying with or without a Form in general undetermined in Scripture.* And another late Writer (b) tells us, That as for the People's complying with the use of publick Forms. when they are imposed, *It is not in question betwixt us. We are so far agreed (as that Writer goes on) that such use (tho' possibly under all circumstances not eligible) yet is not sinful.* And Mr. Baxter (c) assures us, That the Non-Conformist Ministers who met in the Savoy in the years 1660 and 1661, never denied the lawfulness of a Form of Prayer or Liturgy; *tho' some falsely so accuse them.*

And whereas some Persons object against the Lawfulness of Set Forms of Prayer because they

(a) Vindication of his Remarks, Lond. 1695. p. 5. (b) Answer to Dr. Scot's Cases concerning Forms of Prayer, Lond. 1700. p. 73. (c) English Non-Conformity, 2d. Edit. Lond. 1690. p. 11.

are (as they phrase it) a Devised Worship, and invented by Men: I shall return them an Answer in the words of your own Dr. Bryan, who speaks (a) thus to his Dissenting Brethren; *Touching the Devised Worship objected, do but ruminare upon what you have frequently heard and read, and you will see little reason to condemn stinted Prayers, because invented and devised by Men. For how many Inventions of Men are there of the same nature in God's Worship, which you approve of; namely, Set Forms of Catechising, studied Sermons, Interpretations of Scripture, Divisions of it into Chapters and Verses, Contents of Chapters, Marginal References, putting Psalms into Metre, with a multitude more? True it is, invented or devised Worship is unlawful; yet it is Lawful to serve God in a Form of Words devised. For the Form is not Worship, but the Prayer tendered in that Form. And therefore they do not well, that say, A Stinted Form of Prayer is a means of Divine Worship, not ordained of God; and that there is no warrant for it in the Word of God. For God's Word warrants things, not only by special Institution (as all substantial means of Worship; and by necessary consequence, so the translation of the Scripture is warranted, because it must be read to edification; and edify it cannot, unless it be understood) but also by the light of Nature and Reason, according to the general Rules of Scripture. And thus accidental means of God's Worship, which are only Circumstances of the Celebration, as Time, Place, Order, Method, Phrase, and Form of Words, in the Administration of holy things of God; yea, Pulpit to preach in, and Belles to call People together, are warranted.*

(a) Bryan's Dwelling with God, Lond. 1670. p. 306, 307.

And again, the same Author (a) saies, That a true Prayer may be made to God in a set Form, cannot be denied. Because things agreeable to God's will may be disposed therein, as in the Lords Prayer. And it's possible for the Heart and Affections to go along with it; and Faith, and other Graces to be exercis'd in it. But (saies he) you question, Whether Ministers may read in the Congregation prescribed Forms of Prayers imposed? Admit it were Unlawful for them to do it; yet it is warrantable for you to be present at such Prayers. Because all Prayers, wherein you join, are stinted to you, and you are tyed to the Form of words uttered by him that praies. Nor is a holy good Prayer made evil to him that hears it, for the possibility aforesaid.

2. Since the use of a Form of Prayer is allowed, the next Question is, Whether our Established Liturgy is such a Form, as may be used without sin. Mr. Baxter (b) saies, That the Non-Conformist Ministers at the Savoy in 1660 and 1661 denied not the soundness of the Matter contained in the Form of the English Liturgy in the main. They thought it a good Book, and the making of it a great Reformation, and honored the excellent Men that made it: but they thought it not such as could not, or should not in any thing be amended, or that all Might say was without fault. And farther he saies, That they offered to use it, when amended; and if that could not be had, they told you in their Reply, their purpose rather to communicate in the use of it, than not at all. Nay, (c) saies he, I found the Liturgy in the main fit

(a) Ibid. p. 308; 309. (b) English N. C. p. 11. (c) Ibid. p. 229.

for my serious desires and praises to God. And (a) there are very few Churches on Earth, that have not worse Doctrine, and a worse Liturgy than ours. And (b) again, Almost every Church on Earth hath a worse Liturgy (as I said) and People than ours: but I dare not separate from almost every Church on Earth; and therefore not from one, for a reason that is common to almost all.

Now if you object, That Mr. Baxter owns and supposes our Liturgy to be faulty, notwithstanding; I answer, That he means not sinful Faults, but Imperfections only. For he (c) assures us, That the Non-Conforming Ministers at the Savoy, (and he himself was one of the number) *meddled not against it* (that is, against our Liturgy) *by any accusation of it as sinful*. Besides, if this be not his meaning, he is utterly inconsistent with himself; as appears from the Quotations already produced, and from his known practice of Lay-Communion, by joining in the use of our Established Liturgy.

But I shall be more particular. The Church Liturgy may be divided into two parts, viz. 1. The Ordinary Sunday Service, consisting of Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany, and Communion-Office. 2. The Occasional or Extraordinary Offices of Baptism, &c.

1. As for the Sunday Service, Mr. Boyse expressly (d) declares his Opinion for the Lawfulness of our Ordinary Lord's-day Worship. And Mr. Baxter (e) saies, *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is very piously administred in the words of the Liturgy*.

(a) Ibid. p. 226. (b) Ibid. p. 223. (c) Ibid. p. 11. l. 8.
 (d) Vindicat. p. 26. (e) Engl. N. C. p. 227.

Nor do your own Writers condemn the Gestures requir'd by the Establish'd Church in the use of her Liturgy. Mr. Baxter (a) saies, *We are for Corporal Worship, as a due expression of Spiritual: and we are against all undecent Expressions in Praying or Preaching, and all undecent Habits, Gestures or Actions.* Mr. Boyse (b) tells us, that the Scriptures injoin bodily worship in general; and consequently warrant all such devout Postures; as either Nature or civil Custom has taught us to express it by, as Bowing, Prostration, Kneeling, Standing, and (in these parts of the World) Mens being uncovered. Another Writer (c) saies, *We are careful to avoid whatever Nature, Scripture or Custom has made a mark of irreverence in the Worship of our God.* And (d) again, *Kneeling in Prayer we own as a Gesture, which both Nature and Scripture direct to, and so we practise.*

As for Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at which the greatest offence is generally said to be taken, Mr. How (e) declares, *I should never quarrel with any Man for that Gesture it self.* Mr. Boyse (f) saies, *I do not condemn Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, as unlawful.* And another of your late Writers (g) saies, *As for those that think it their Duty or Liberty so to express their Reverence to Almighty God in this Sacrament, with a just abhorrence of all Idolatrous thoughts or pretensions, we do not judge them.* And Mr. Baxter (h) saies, *The Non-Conformist Ministers at the Savoy in 1660 and 1661. never accused our*

(a) Engl. N. C. p. 15. (b) Vindic. p. 30. (c) Letter to Mr. Burseough, Lond. 1700. p. 71. (d) Ibid. (e) Considerations of a Preface, &c. Lond. 1701. p. 23. (f) Vindic. p. 5. (g) Letter to Mr. Burseough, p. 91. (h) Engl. N. C. p. 11.

Kneeling at the Lord's Supper, as unlawful. He tells us (a) also, That *they medled not with the Surplice, Tippet, Hood, Rochet, Cope.* And now, Gentlemen, I appeal to your selves, and your own Party, whether our ordinary Sunday Service be not very lawful.

2. Mr. Baxter (b) saies, *The most of all it's (that is, the Liturgy's) faults are in the By-Offices, Baptism, Confirmation, and Burial, and the Rubrics.* And yet even these are far from being sinful.

The Offices of Public and Private Baptism of Infants, and that for Adult Persons, are in substance the same. Private Baptism indeed has been frequently condemned by your Brethren in former times; but your own Mr. Boyse has good reason to say, (c) *I am sure the generality of Dissenters have receded from the rigor of this Rule.* The use of Sponsors has been objected against by some; but your own best Divines will not say 'tis sinful. The Cross in Baptism seems to have the nature of a Sacrament, say some. Your own Divines (as Mr. Baxter (d) tells us) *accused not all significant use of the Cross, but only that in Baptism it seemed to have all or most of the nature of a Human Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace.* It seems so perhaps; but our Divines have abundantly proved, that it is not really such; and I am persuaded you will not contradict them.

Mr. Boyse (e) calls Confirmation *a very useful practice, and agreeable to the general Rules of Scripture.* Mr. Baxter (f) saies, *We desire it (and have written for it) as a chief means of the Reformation of all our Churches in the Land.* And how

(a) Engl. N.C. p. 12. (b) Ibid. p. 226. (c) Vindic. p. 37. (d) Engl. N.C. p. 12. (e) Vindic. p. 36. (f) Engl. N.C. p. 15.

far our Office of Confirmation is from being sinful, I leave to your own Consciences to determin.

The Office of Burial is generally comply'd with by your own People. And tho' some do quarrel at a very harmless passage in it, yet I am confident none can say, 'tis sinful.

The Office of Matrimony is at least so inoffensive, that I never heard of any of your Party, who would not venture to be Marry'd by it.

'Twere easy, Gentlemen, to enlarge: but I forbear. I should have spoken more fully to these matters, had I not been verily persuaded, that neither your selves nor your Brethren will say, that there is any thing Absolutely sinful in these Offices, and 'tis only the use of the Offices that the Layety are requir'd to join in. Much has been written in answer to these Objections, which I only touch upon: but as far as I can perceive, the Controversy is not concerning the Lawfulness, but concerning the Expediency of the Churches Injunctions.

C H A P. XVII.

Some Objections against the Established Liturgy answer'd.

SOME Persons indeed who have more heat than light, have pretended, that our Liturgy is an Idolatrous Book, even the *Mass* in *English*. Gentlemen, I cannot think that you are so ignorant, or imprudent, as to think this Objection worth answering. However, for the satisfaction of those who are less wise and knowing that your selves,

give me leave to transcribe the words of Dr. Bryan, who was so far from being prejudic'd in favor of our Cause, that he was actually silenc'd for Non-Conformity, when he wrote them.

This Person (speaking of that slander upon our Liturgy, viz. that it is Idolatrous, and the *Mass* in English) (a) saies, *This is as true as that light is darknes, and white black. Consider, what is the Matter of the Popish Mass; Prayers in an unknown Tongue, 10 Saints departed, and 10 feigned Saints; receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in one kind, and unbloudy Sacrifice offered up for the Quick and Dead, the real Presence, Satisfaction for Venial Sins, Temporal Penance for Mortal Sins, blotting out the second Commandment, or confounding it with the first, &c. Blackness and Darknes. And, what is the Matter of our English Liturgy; reading the Holy Scriptures in a known Tongue; the calling upon God in the Mediation of Christ, and not upon Angels and Saints; for the Living, and not for the Dead; the Administration of the Holy Supper in both kinds; singing of David's Psalms, &c. All white and light.*

And tho' it be urg'd by many (who I am confident never saw, and cannot understand the *Popish Mass*; and consequently ought not to be over confident in their Affirmations) I say, tho' it be urg'd by many, that several of the Prayers in our Liturgy, are found word for word in the *Mass-Book*; yet the same Dr. Bryan assures us, that this is no Objection against the Goodness of them; for (b) saies he, *so may a true Man's Goods be found in a*

(a) Dwelling with God, p. 309, 310. (b) Ibid. p. 310, 311.

Thieve's den; and the Goods of the Church may be in the possession of Antichrist an Usurper: which Goods she may Lawfully require, and take back again, not as borrow'd from him, but as due to her self, being the rich Legacies, which Christ bequeathed to his Church, which Antichrist had seiz'd upon. The Good therefore in the Mals-Book belongeth not to Antichrist, but the foul gross Errors which are purg'd out of ours.

There are others indeed, who will not venture to charge our Liturgy with Popery, but with some other gross Faults and Corruptions, which, they say, are not purged out. But to these also the same Dr. Bryan (a) answers in the following words; *Admit there be, or were (some foul Errors and gross Corruptions in the Establish'd Liturgy, which are not purg'd out) yet there are no Fundamental Errors, nor any that bordereth thereupon objected. The Corruptions objected are misapplications of Scriptures, frequent repetition of the same things, disordered Prayers and Responsories, breaking Petitions asunder, &c. No Errors that concern the main grounds, or chief Heads of Christianity; but Faults that may be tolerated, and for which a Christian has no cause to separate. Suppose a Teacher misalledge a Text of Scripture, or that something be amiss in his Prayer, when he exerciseth his own Gifts; is this a ground sufficient to separate from the Ordinance of God, or reject the good for that which is amiss?*

But the same Author proceeds. *Nor is there (saies he) any Doctrinal passage in any of the Prayers, that may not bear a good construction, and so Amen may be said to it. Charity binds us to take*

(a) Ibid. p. 311.

every thing in the best sense; nor can you think it pleasing to God, for some evil that may be fastened upon some passages, to withdraw Communion; especially when Communion may be had without approving of any of the Errors or Corruptions; tho' we do not for their sakes withdraw from the Communion of the Churches, while they are exercised.

Nor do I suppose, that you think the bare determination or imposition of things in themselves lawful and indifferent, do's make them sinful to us; and consequently, that tho' our Liturgy with its Ceremonies be not sinful in it self, yet it is therefore sinful, because 'tis commanded. For whatever has been formerly urg'd with great warmth by some Persons of great Note amongst you; I doubt not but you are now universally of another opinion,

For, *First*, if such imposition makes our Liturgy and Ceremonies sinful, then they are alwaies absolutely unlawful upon this account, because they are alwaies imposed. And consequently they can never so much as once be us'd without sinning against God. Now this Assertion you will by no means grant; and besides, the ordinary practice of your own Party in holding occasional Lay-Communion with us, and the words of your own Authors already cited, which so fully justify our Sunday Service in particular, do effectually confute it. *Secondly*, Your own Writers do now declare, that the imposition of things lawful in themselves do's not make them unlawful.

Mr. Boyse (a) tells us, That *all those circumstantial Modes of Worship, that are in general neces-*

(a) Vindic. p. 28.

sary by Divine Precept (because God's own Commands about his Worship cannot be executed without the Determination of them) and yet are not in particular determined in Scripture, must be determined by Human Prudence: and that to call such circumstantial Modes, when determined agreeably to the general Rules of Scripture, Human Inventions, is a very improper sense of the word; and to make them sinful, is a Principle only fit for the wildest Sectaries; since it would condemn a great many prudential Orders practis'd both by them and us, and indeed by all Churches in the World,

Mr. Baxter (b) saies, The Dissenting Ministers in 1660 and 1661 *Never thought that things indifferent do become unlawful to us, because the Magistrate commandeth them. And as for our Liturgy in particular, he tells us, that (c) They thought not the imposition of it a reason sufficient to prove it unlawful for them to use it, were there no more. And another Writer, whose words I have already cited, (d) saies, It is not in question betwixt us, whether it be lawful to use an impos'd Liturgy. We are so far agreed (as he there goes on) that such use (tho' possibly under all circumstances not eligible) yet is not sinful. For as your own Dr. Bryan rightly (e) argues, If all such means of Worship must be ordered by special Institution, or they shall be unlawful; God must (upon the matter) have no Worship at all from us in the means, which he himself hath ordain'd. Because it is impossible to use those means, and not to do many things which he hath not instituted.*

(b) English N. C. p. 13. (c) Ibid. p. 11. (d) Answer to Dr. Scot concerning Forms of Prayer, p. 73. (e) Dwelling with God, p. 308.

C H A P. XVIII.

*The Objection of our Want of Discipline
answer'd.*

BUT there is another Objection, Gentlemen, which I think my self obliged to take notice of; not because it is weighty, but because it is popular. 'Tis said, that there is great want of Discipline amongst us; that there are diverse bad Clergymen and Laymen of the Church of *England*; and that it is sinful to join in that Communion, which has such defiled Members; because those who join in Communion with ungodly People, are polluted by it. And therefore these Persons tell us, that tho' they could come to our Churches, and join in our Liturgy, with holy Company; yet they dare not now be present there, lest they become partakers of other Mens Iniquities. Now to this Objection, which has much more of the *Pharisee*, than of the *Christian* in it, I answer,

1. There is not the least syllable of proof, either from Scripture or Reason, that the badness of some Members of a Church do's defile the rest. 'Tis true, Discipline ought to be exercis'd, and wicked Men (whether of the Clergy or of the Layety) ought to be cast out; and if this be not done, the fault will lye at the door of those Persons, thro' whose negligence these Corruptions are suffered to continue in the Church: but those who did what they were able, in their proper Spheres, to remove those evils, will never be charged with the guilt of them. And to refuse
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Communion with any Church upon the account of some wicked Members, is what neither Reason nor Scripture will justify. And I desire you, Gentlemen, if you differ from me in this point, to prove the contrary.

Nay farther, the Scripture is so far from condemning those, who join with such Churches as have wicked Members, whether of the Clergy or of the Layety; that it plainly allows it to be lawful so to do. And this appears from the practice of Christ himself and his Apostles. For, as Mr. Baxter rightly (a) observes, *The Church of the Jews had Priests unlawfully introduc'd, and corrupt Teachers and Worship, and yet Christ disowned not Communion with them in Synagogues, and Temples, and Houses; save only that he conform'd not to their sinful Traditions and Corruptions. The Church of the Corinthians had Men guilty of Schism and Faction, and quarreling with the Apostle, wronging each other, sinful Law-suits, scandalous persons, denying the Resurrection, grossly abusing the Sacrament and Communion, &c. The Churches of Galatia, Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, &c. had such faults, as I need not tell you of. Yet no Man is bid or allowed to disown Communion with them.*

Again, whereas it is objected, that some of the Church of England Clergymen are bad livers, your own Dr. Bryan (b) answers, *That you may find as bad as any of these in the Church of Israel, and as many for the space of ground, before our Savior's time, and in his days, and in the Apostolical Churches; and yet you do not find any of the People to have forsaken the public Ordinances of God. How far the*

(a) English N. C. p. 175. (b) Dwelling with God, p. 313.
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Charge is true or false, I shall not now meddle. In some Countries, I am sure, that there are many Sober, Godly, Orthodox, able Preachers, yet in possession of the public places. ^{or} And if you know any Country, where it is worse, consider if Christ himself did not join with worse. ^{no} And as for the ignorance and profaness of some of our Lay-members, he (a) tells us, That ignorant and profane Persons have alwaies been in the Church. It was so in the Churches Infancy, and so in her perpetual growth, and so shall be to the end of the World; at least till Christ come the second time; but these are not of the Church, which has its denomination of the better part.

Whatever Clamors there be against the present Clergy and Layety of the Established Church of England; 'tis notorious, that we are not worse, than the Jews were in the beginning of the Gospel. And if 'twas then lawful to join with them; certainly 'tis lawful now to join with us. Wherefore the words of the same Dr. Bryan in another place, are a full Answer to this Argument. I shall presume (saies (b) he) you will freely grant, both that 'tis necessary to Salvation, that a Man be a Member of the true Visible Church, because in the Word you find the Profession of the true Religion; yea, the very hope of Salvation, and joining to the Church, going together: And that so long as God continueth the Doctrine of Salvation to a People, and his solemn Worship; so long he dwells among that People, and Salvation may be had there; and that no utter separation may be made from those Assemblies, where God dwelleth, and where Men may be assured to find Salvation, tho' there may be many great Corruptions

(a) Ibid, p. 301. (b) Ibid, p. 293.

both in Doctrine and Worship, in those Assemblies. There were so in the Church of the Jews in Christ's time, the Priests and Teachers were ignorant and wicked, and had a corrupt and unlawful entrance into their Calling; and the People were like to the Priest generally, notoriously and obstinately ungodly; and the Worship used in that Church was wofully corrupt, many superstitious Ceremonies, the observation whereof was more strictly urged than the Commandments and Ordinances of God; the Temple made a Den of Thieves, the Discipline and Censures shamefully abused, the Doctrine was corrupt in many Points, and the great Sacrament of the Passover ill timed: Yet the Word tells you, Christ (whose example it binds you to follow, and you profess yourselves followers of him in all imitable things) made no separation from this Church, professed himself a Member of it, was by Circumcision incorporated a Member of it, received Baptism in a Congregation of that People, was a hearer of their Common-service and their Teachers, allowing and commanding his Disciples to hear them, communicated in the Passover with the People and the Priest; no more did his Apostles make separation from this Church after his Ascension, till their day had its period. Peter and John went to their public Prayer in the Temple. So Paul and Barnabas in their Synagogue. By their example it appears, that till God hath forsaken the Church, no Man may forsake it; and that it is no sufficient warrant to separate from a Church, because it is guilty of such sins and corruptions, as deserves God should forsake it, and for which he hath threatned in his Word, that he will forsake it: till it appears that God hath put in execution that which he justly threatned, we ought to acknowledge and receive it as his house, and not to refuse to dwell with him in it. For shall Man be holier

lier than God, and hate corruption more than he? And yet we may not communicate with it, by consenting to any corruptions that are, or shall be detected, or proved to be in it, wherein we have our Savior's example to guide us. And this I take for granted, that you will surely grant, because many Books largely asserting all this, have been many years in the hands of those, who have led away many to Separation, a syllable whereof they have not gainsaid: and they are in yours; nor have I heard a word of your Dissenting. These, Gentlemen, are the words of one, who was actually silenced for Non-conformity, when he wrote them. But,

2. If this Principle be true, viz. that 'tis unlawful to join in Communion with that Church, which has wicked Members, whether of the Clergy or Layety; I say, if this Principle be true, then 'tis impossible for a Man to join in Communion with any Church in the World; because every Church in the World has such Persons in it. And I appeal to your selves, Gentlemen, whether this be not true. Give me an Instance, if you can, of any Church, which has not wicked Members, both of the Clergy and of the Layety.

I am sure those of your Persuasion cannot pretend to greater Purity, than all the World besides. Whether the Established Church, or your Party, has the greater number of wicked Persons belonging to it; needs not to be determined. But this is manifest, that there are too too many wicked Persons amongst your selves; and therefore you cannot pretend, that our Churches having wicked Members, makes it unlawful for you to join with her; because by the same Argument it will be proved, that 'tis unlawful for you to join with your own Party.

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The Evidence of this Truth has lately extorted an ingenuous confession from a strict and zealous Dissenter. *I must acknowledge* (saies (a) he) *that it fares with the Church of England, and with the Dissenters both, as it hath alwaies fared with Christ's Church in the whole World; that while suppressed and persecuted, their Professors were few, and their Profession more severe. But when a Religion comes to be the Mode of a Country, so many painted Hypocrites get into the Church, who are not by their voices to be distinguished, that Guile is not to be seen, till it arrive to Apostacy. And again, I have already said* (saies (b) he) *that both the Church of England and the Dissenters, suffer in their Reputation for the mixt multitude of their Members, which is occasioned by their present prosperity. If a third Party were to tyrannize over them both, we should see then who were Professors, and who were Confessors: but now it cannot be. Wherefore, I think 'twere well to put both sides in mind of one thing, which they are bound mutually to observe; and that is, That the Personal Miscarriages of any Person or Member, is not really any Reflection upon the Religion they profess, nor ought to be so accounted, unless it be where such Miscarriages are the direct Dictates of the Doctrines they teach. I am persuaded, Gentlemen, that no Dissenter in England will charge the Established Church with Teaching such Doctrines as tend to Licentiousness and Immorality; and therefore the Miscarriages of our Party are not to be objected against us, any more than those of your Party are to be objected against your selves.*

(a) Enquiry into the occas. Conform. of Dissenters, p. 8.

(b) Ibid. p. 12.

God knows, there are too many bad People of all sorts, and in all Communion, and in all Churches. And if a Man will join in Communion with no Church that hath bad People in it; then he must never practise Church-Communion with any sort of Christians upon the face of the Earth.

3. Tho' it were granted against all Reason and plain Scripture, that want of Discipline is a just Objection against joining in Communion with that Church which neglects it; yet such as separate from the Established Church of *England*, cannot say that she neglects it. For this is certain, and confessed on all hands, that Discipline cannot be exercis'd in any Church, but by the Church Governors; and that the Church Governors cannot inflict Punishment for Crimes that are not proved. And therefore the Governors of the Church of *England* cannot condemn and punish those wicked Persons of her Communion, who were never prosecuted, or never had any Accusations made good against them. If therefore Discipline be not exercis'd by our Church towards some faulty Members; the Question is, thro' whose fault 'tis neglected. Certainly 'tis neglected thro' the fault of those, who know vicious Persons, and yet will not prosecute and convict them.

Those Persons therefore, that make this Objection, must either know that good proof may be brought against our vicious Members, or they must not know it. If they do not know that good proof may be brought against them; then with what face can they blame the Church Governors for not casting them out? But if they do know that good proof may be brought against them; then why do they not prosecute, and convict them, and cause them to be censured?

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'Twill be said perhaps, that they are not bound to be at the trouble of prosecuting and convicting. And I am sure, they are much less bound to accuse the Church; for not censuring those who were never prosecuted or convicted. But I pray, would those persons desire the Church to censure without good Proof? And how shall the Church have any Proof, unless those that know it, will produce it? The fault therefore lies at their door, whose negligence causes our want of Discipline. Would any Man blame a Judge for not condemning a Thief, who was never indicted and convicted? And shall the Church-Governors then debar a Christian of the great Privileges and Blessings of Church-Communion, before that Christian is accus'd and prov'd guilty of such Crimes as deserve so heavy a Censure?

Believe me, Gentlemen, this cursed practice is the cause of our present Want of Discipline. Men are greedy of Slander, and spread ill reports with a sort of devilish zeal: but they will not prove a syllable of what they talk with the greatest confidence imaginable. Oh, say they, the Matter is notorious, and every Body knows it. But was this ever made appear before a competent Judge? If not; how can they blame the Judge for not inflicting Punishment?

Were Men but half so earnest in bringing vicious Persons to punishment, as they are in railing against them, and against the Establish'd Church for their sakes: the want of Discipline would cease to be an Objection against us.

Blessed be God, our Laws are very good; but alas! they want Execution. And those who do not labor to the utmost of their power to have
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them put in execution, must expect to answer for it at God's Tribunal.

Perhaps it may be said, that some of our Governors are so bad, that they will not do Justice; and therefore 'tis in vain to prosecute a vicious Person. But to this I answer, 1. That none can make this pretence, till he has made sufficient tryal without success. 2. That there are not many such Governors amongst us; and if one neglects his Duty, the Cause may be brought before another. 3. That there are many Governors of your own Party who have power to punish these Crimes, for which you exclaim against our Party. Therefore bring our Members before the Magistrates of your own persuasion; and get them to punish them severely, And if your own Magistrates be negligent, I pray, don't blame our Church-Governors. But 4. Our Case in *England* is such, that the Laws have put it in the power of the Prosecutor to make the Governor himself smart severely, if he neglects to inflict due punishment. So that we have all imaginable encouragement to be active and diligent in promoting this Work of Reformation; and we have reason to thank God, that notwithstanding this pretence, Justice is generally done throughout the Nation, when the Prosecutors carry on their work with courage and vigor.

4. That I may wholly silence this noisy Objection, I desire this one great Truth may be well consider'd, viz. That under the Gospel-Dispensation, no Man can receive pollution or damage from the sin of another person, unless he makes that sin his own by joining in it, or favoring it, or some other such like method. Wherefore how wicked soever the Members of any Church be, I shall not be answerable for their wickedness, if

I am so far from joining in it, that I do whatsoever lies in my power to prevent or punish it. Those Persons therefore, who object our want of Discipline, may rest satisfy'd, that they may safely join in Communion with us notwithstanding; provided they be not partakers of their Neighbors Vices, and have done what they were able in order to a Reformation of Manners.

C H A P. XIX.

That the Dissenters do account the Terms of Lay-Communion with the Established Church to be Lawful.

BUT to speak the plain Truth, Gentlemen, whatever may be sometimes pretended by some Persons, yet the generality of your own Writers, and Teachers, and People, do not think, that either the Liturgy it self, or its pretended likeness to the *Mass-Book*, or any other faults in it, or the Imposition of it, or our want of Discipline; I say, the generality of your own Writers, and Teachers, and People, do not think, that any of these things is a real Objection against the Lawfulness of the Terms of Lay-Communion with the Establish'd Church of *England*.

For if any of these things do's make Lay-Communion with us to be unlawful; then it makes Lay-Communion with us to be alwales unlawful: and consequently 'tis a sin to join in Occasional Lay-Communion with us. And yet 'tis plainly confessed by your own Party, that Occasional Lay-Communion with the Church of *England* is Law-

ful. And for this I shall refer you to him that answers Mr. *Burscough*, out of whom I shall transcribe a few Passages.

P. 6. He saies, *We do not think it utterly unlawful, or absolutely sinful, to Communicate occasionally with the Church of England, at least in a Lay-Communion.* Again, p. 27, 28. *That we once thought our Communion with the Church of England Lawful, we grant; for had we not been so persuaded, we had been Self-condemned by our own practice.* And consequently, if you are not so persuaded now, you are now Self-condemned by your own practice.

But our Author proceeds, *We are still of the same Opinion, that it is Lawful to Communicate with the Church of England, i. e. that it is not absolutely and in it self sinful so to do.* *We once thought the Conformity you now contend for, i. e. our Lay-Conformity, to be our Duty; nor have we repented of these our Thoughts to this day, nor have we acted any thing that is inconsistent with them.* Would to God, this last Clause were true; however, the whole Passage is home to my purpose.

'Tis notorious that diverse of your own Party do upon occasion join with the Established Church of England as Lay-Persons. Now I cannot think, that you condemn this Action of theirs; because tho' it is in all parts of the Kingdom, and particularly at *Colchester*, so readily practiced, yet you suffer it to pass without any Reproof (as far as ever I could learn) either in private Discourse, or from the Pulpit. And I believe you are Persons of so much Conscience, that did you conceive that Dissenters sinned in so doing, you would endeavor to hinder your own People from it, by discovering to them the guilt and danger of it.

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From hence then I cannot but conclude, that you do all believe the Terms of Lay-Communion with us to be lawful; and if you think otherwise, I beg you to let not only my self, but your followers also understand it. Tell them of it in your Sermons, and suffer not sin upon them. Let them be satisfy'd what your opinion is concerning this their Practice. If you judge it sinful, dissuade them from it: but if you think it lawful, my Point is gained.

Besides, I suppose, Gentlemen, you have seen a Discourse intituled, *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters in Cases of Preferment, with a Preface to Mr. How, printed 1701.* We know the great Reputation which Mr. How has gained amongst you; and therefore we ought, in deference to your own judgment, to esteem him one of your ablest and best Divines. Now the Author of this *Enquiry*, who is himself a zealous and strict Dissenter, speaks to Mr. How (a) these following Words.

The Author (meaning Himself) desires in the Name of Himself and a great many honest good Christians, who would be glad to see this case (of Occasional Lay-Communion with the Church of England) decided, that you will by your self, or some other hand, as you please, declare to the World, whether this practice of alternate Communion be allowed, either by your own Congregation in particular, or the Dissenters in general.

And if not so allowed, then he conjures you by the honor you owe to your Profession, and the tenderness you have for the Weakness of others; by the regard you have to God's honor, and the Church

(a) Preface, p. 2.

you serve; that such proceedings may receive their due censure, tho' the Persons wear the gay cloathes and the gold Ring; that the sincerity and purity of Dissenting Protestants may be vindicated to the World, both in their Discipline, as well as Doctrine; and that without respect of Persons.

If on the other hand it be allowed, 'tis desired it may be defended by such Arguments as you think convenient; which the Author promises, if desired, never to reply to; or if you give him that liberty, shall do it, so, as you shall easily see is in order only to be informed, and always suitable to the respect which is due to your Person; for whom none has a greater esteem.

If none of these Requests shall be granted, the World must believe that Dissenters do allow themselves to practise what they cannot defend.

Was it possible for any thing to be penned with greater Submission, Modesty and Earnestness? The Author was a Dissenter himself; was scandalized at his Brethrens practice of Occasional Lay-Communion with the Established Church of England; tells Mr. How, That many others were offended at the same thing; begs his Opinion as an honest Casuist, for the Satisfaction of his Own and other Men's Consciences; desires, that, if Mr. How himself will not determin the Point, he would cause some other hand to do it; tells him plainly, what danger the Reputation of the Dissenters is certainly in, if none of these Requests be granted, viz. That the World must (and Experience proves, that they now do) believe, that Dissenters do allow themselves to practise what they cannot defend. And surely, Gentlemen, all these great Motives ought to have prevailed upon

on such a Pastor, as loves to instruct, and edify, and save Souls, to declare his judgment.

I am ashamed and sorry, I confess, to relate what an Answer was returned to this *Enquirer*. Mr. *How* soon after, (that he might seem to say something for himself) published his *Considerations*; in which he talks after such a manner, as (I am loth, and yet am forced to say it) do's not become a Person of Integrity.

I was amazed to find him saying, (a) That he saw nothing (in the *Enquiry*) that looks like Reasoning, but what is so idly Sophistical, that any one of common Sense can see thro' it. Had the *Enquirer* returned Mr. *How* his own Compliment, there are those in the World, that think he had not wronged him.

But to speak a little plain truth, the Arguments in the *Enquiry* are thought by very judicious Men to be unanswerable; and I can assure Mr. *How*, that diverse Persons, as wise as himself, do think he cannot, and dares not answer them. Let me intreat you, Gentlemen, to use your Interest with Mr. *How*, and engage him in that Controversy. Tell him farther, that a Friend of yours doth, in plain terms, challenge him to publish an Answer to them.

However, Mr. *How*'s *Considerations* are so far from condemning this Occasional Lay-Communion with us, that he (b) therein challenges any Man in all the World to say, that ever he persuaded him not to conform. Whether this Indifference becomes his Character as a Dissenting Minister, the *Enquirer* (c) leaves it to himself to

(a) *Confid.* p. 33. (b) *Ibid.* p. 4. (c) Letter to Mr. *How*.
Lond. 1701. p. 11.

consider; and I pray God he may consider seriously of it. But Mr. *How* saies farther, (a) That he thinks, he *ought not* to advise any Man against Conformity. How this Opinion can be consistent with his maintaining a separate Meeting, in opposition to that very Establishment, which he owns to be so far from being sinful, that he *ought not* to advise any Man against it; I believe the World is already satisfy'd, and therefore I shall not dispute. But it plainly appears from hence, that Mr. *How* judges not only Occasional, but Constant Lay-Communion with us to be very Lawful; because otherwise, he professing himself a Minister of the Gospel, is bound in Conscience to persuade Men not to Conform, and to advise against Conformity.

Besides, this Practice of joining with us in the quality of Lay-Persons, was formerly, and is now openly allowed by the generality of your own Teachers, throughout the whole Nation. Mr. *Baxter* (b) tells us, that before the year 1638. *there was scarce more than one Non-Conformist, that held any Church-Communion, but Parochial, in each County.*

What Mr. *Baxter* himself, Mr. *Crofton*, Dr. *Bates*, and many others of your greatest Pillars did, needs not to be mentioned. Mr. *How* (c) tells us, that most of the considerable ejected Non-Conformist Ministers met in 1662, and agreed to hold Occasional Communion with the Established Church: And (saies he) *as far as I could by enquiry learn, I can little doubt this to have been the judgment of their Fellow-sufferers through the*

(a) Confid. p. 8. (b) Engl. N. C. p. 223. (c) Confid. p. 33.

Nation ever since. And as for the People, *Many of them* (saies (a) a late Writer of your own) *oft-times come to the Parish-Churches, and join with the Congregation in Prayer, Praise, Hearing, Receiving of the Sacrament.*

Nor has any Dissenting Minister offered to confute or contradict what Mr. *How* has said, or endeavored to answer those Arguments, which the Author of the *Enquiry* (tho' a Dissenter himself) urges against the Dissenters practice of holding Occasional Lay-Communion with us, when at the same time they dissent from us. Now 'tis evident, that the Dissenting Teachers must either think the practice of Occasional Lay-Communion Lawful to those that Dissent, and the *Enquirer's* Arguments capable of an Answer; or else they must condemn the practice. If they think it Lawful, the Point is gain'd: but if they think otherwise, let them condemn it. But since their Congregations do still openly proceed in the same practice, without any Censure or Rebuke; we must conclude that their Teachers do generally approve of this practice, and that they think the Arguments of the *Enquirer* capable of an Answer. And therefore (by the way) give me leave to press and importune your Selves, or any one or more of your Brethren, to convince the World of the Weakness of them,

But I need not make any farther enlargements; it being abundantly manifest from what has been already said, that your own Party do generally acknowledge it to be Lawful to hold Occasional Lay-Communion with us. And consequently,

(a) Examination of Dr. *Harscard's* Discourse concerning Edification, Lond. p. 3.

your own Party do account the terms of Lay-Communion with the Established Church of *England*, to be Lawful.

C H A P. XX.

That it is lawful to hold constant Lay-Communion with the Established Church of England.

I Shall now prove in the next place, that it is Lawful to hold Constant Lay-Communion with the Established Church of *England*. And this will easily appear from what has been already said.

For since 'tis sometimes Lawful to join as Lay-Persons with the Established Church; certainly 'tis alwaies Lawful so to do, unless there be some Reason, which makes it Lawful at one time or place, but not at another. Now if there be any reason, which makes it Lawful at one time or place, but not at another; then this reason must be, either because there is some new sinful term of Lay-Communion requir'd at one time or place, which is not requir'd at another; or, because some different Circumstance, in the use of the same terms, makes Lay-Communion unlawful at one time or place, tho' not at another. But neither of these things can be pretended.

1. It cannot be pretended, that there is any new sinful term of Lay-Communion requir'd at one time or place, which is not requir'd at another. This is so evident, that it cannot be denyed. Our terms of Lay-Communion are alwaies,
and

and every where, the very same. And therefore if they are not sinful to day, they are not sinful to morrow, and so on to the end of our Lives; and if they are not sinful at *London*, they are not sinful at *Colchester*, and so on throughout the whole Kingdom.

2. There is no different Circumstance, in the use of the same terms, which makes Lay-Communion unlawful at one time or place, tho' not at another. Two things are sometimes pretended against the Lawfulness of holding Constant Communion with us, by those who acknowledge the terms of our Lay-Communion to be Lawful, and that they can safely join in Occasional Lay-Communion with us. 1. Some say, that the Minister of their Parish leads a Vicious Life, and therefore they do not think it Lawful to go to hear him. 2. Others say, that they are oblig'd to go, where they can edify best, and profit most; and therefore 'tis unlawful for them to come constantly to Church, where they cannot edify and profit so much as at a Meeting.

Gentlemen, Suppose that in these Cases it were not Lawful to join constantly in Communion with the Established Church of *England*; yet you cannot but know, how few of those who separate from her, can make either of these Pretences. Nay, 'tis notorious, that the far greater part of Dissenters do live in *London*, and other great Towns, and do separate from such Ministers, as lead as good Lives, and preach as good Sermons, as any Clergymen upon the face of the Earth. But because 'tis possible, there may be some few Ministers, whose Lives or Sermons may bear just exceptions, therefore I shall consider these Cases.

First

First then, Tho' a Minister leads a Vicious Life, yet the People may Lawfully hold Constant Communion with the Established Church of *England* notwithstanding. For,

1. The Vicious Life of the Minister do's by no means make it unlawful for the People to hear him, or impossible for them to edify and profit by him. This appears from *Matth.* 23. 2, 3. where our Blessed Lord commands his Disciples and the Multitudes, saying, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Seat. All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.* Without all doubt, the Scribes and Pharisees were as Vicious as any of our Clergymen; and our Savior knew what the Hearers ought to do, when the Teacher is wicked. And yet our Savior do's not command Men to separate, or tell them that 'tis unlawful to hear such Teachers. No; he positively and expressly orders even his own Disciples to hear and be instructed by their Sermons, but not to follow their Examples. And accordingly it must be said to these Objectors; *A wicked Minister is a Teacher of the Gospel. All therefore, whatsoever he bids you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after his works: for he saies, and does not.* This Text is so very expresse and plain, that I have often wonder'd, how any Person could imagin it to be unlawful to hear that Clergyman preach, who leads a Vicious Life. But,

2. Tho' it were granted against all Reason, that it is unlawful to hear a Vicious Clergyman; yet there is none of these Objectors, but may hear another Church of *England* Clergyman, whose Life cannot be objected against. And consequently,

ly, they may still most lawfully hold Constant Lay-Communion with the Established Church of *England*; tho' not under the Ministry of that particular Person who leads a Vicious Life.

Secondly, Tho' a Minister's Sermons be not so well compos'd, as those of a more accurate Preacher; yet Men may edify and profit by him notwithstanding. For Edification and Profit proceed not from Elegancy of Stile, or manner of Delivery, &c. but from Soundness of Doctrine. And if a Man's Matter be good, 'tis not necessary that his Way be taking. But tho' it were granted, that some Ministers of the Established Church, are really unedifying Preachers, yet other Ministers, nay, the generality of the Ministers of the same Church, do instruct as well as any Teachers in the World; and the People may edify and profit by them, as much as by any Men whatsoever. And therefore, if these Objectors do really think it unlawful to hear one, they may go to another. And consequently, they may Lawfully hold Constant Lay-Communion with the Established Church of *England*, tho' they be not Hearers of this particular Man, and make not a part of his particular Congregation.

Wherefore, since the terms of our Lay-Communion are alwaies, and every where the very same; and since there is no different Circumstance, which makes them unlawful at one time or place, tho' not at another; 'tis plain, that since our terms of Lay-Communion are Lawful sometimes, therefore they are Lawful alwaies, at all times, and in all places. And consequently, 'tis Lawful to hold Constant Lay-Communion with the Established Church of *England*.

C H A P. XXI.

That the Schism between the Established Church of England and the Dissenters, is to be charged on the Dissenters side; First, because the Dissenting Ministers are not validly Ordained.

AND now, Gentlemen, having fairly determined this great and Fundamental Point, concerning the Lawfulness of the Terms of Lay-Communion with the Established Church of England; 'twill be very easily prov'd, that the present *Schism* between the Established Church of England and your selves, is to be charged on your side. For,

First, I have prov'd, that there are many pretended Ministers of *Jesus Christ* amongst us, who have no valid Ordination, and consequently no Commission to preach the Gospel. And therefore 'tis plain, that there is a *Schism* between those Ministers who are validly Ordained, and those pretended Ministers. Now since 'tis granted on both sides, that the Ministers of the Established Church are validly Ordained; and since it appears from what hath been already discours'd, that such Ministers, as were Ordained by Presbyters without Bishops, are not validly Ordained; and since 'tis notorious, that all those Ministers, who were Ordained by Presbyters without Bishops, do belong to your Party; therefore the *Schism* is most certainly to be charged on your Party. Because your Ministers, being not validly Ordained, are Usurpers of the Ministerial Office;

fice, and consequently both they themselves are Schismatical Leaders, and the People that follow them, are Schismatics for so doing, and receiving those as the Ambassadors of Christ, who have no rightly deriv'd Commission from him.

'Tis true, had the Established Episcopal Church impos'd any one unlawful term of Lay-Communion with her, so that neither the Clergy, nor the Laity could possibly join with her without hazard-ing their eternal Salvation; then there had been some reason to think very favorably of your Ordinations without Bishops, as we do of those in some foreign Protestant Countries. But your case is quite different from theirs, as I have already prov'd. For 'tis notorious, that all Persons whatsoever may Lawfully join with the Established Episcopal Church, as Lay-persons; and therefore there is not the least reason to imagin, that your Ordinations without Bishops are valid.

And tho' it be objected, That some of your Pastors cannot obtain Episcopal Ordination without such Subscriptions, &c. as they dare not make; yet I have already shewn, that this will not excuse either them or their Flocks. Because they themselves may safely continue unordain'd, and join with us in the quality of Laymen; and it cannot be pretended, that the Church cannot subsist, unless they be Ordained to the Ministry.

It may be said, I confess, that some of your present Teachers were Ordained by Bishops, and therefore they have valid Ordination by our own confession. Now 'tis freely granted, that such Persons are validly Ordain'd; and consequently they are not to be charged with *Schism* for any Usurpation of the Ministerial Office. But this is the Case of very few; and consequently my
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Argument remains firm and good against the far greater part of your Teachers.

And as for those Teachers of yours, who were Ordained by Bishops, and have left the Established Church, they are Schismatics also; but upon another account, *viz.* 1. Because they join with and abet your other Teachers, who are not validly Ordain'd, and acknowledge them for Ministers of *Jesus Christ*. 2. Because tho' they were validly Ordain'd, yet they exercise their Functions in a Schismatical manner, as will appear from what follows.

C H A P. XXII.

That the Schism between the Established Church of England, and the Dissenters, is to be charged on the Dissenters side; Secondly, because the Dissenters do oppose their proper Ministers.

SEcondly, Tho' it were granted against all Reason, that all the Pastors, both of our own and your Party (as well those who were Ordained by Presbyters without Bishops, and those who have received Episcopal Ordination) I say, tho' it were granted, that all our Pastors, and yours too are validly Ordained; yet I have proved, that there is a *Schism* notwithstanding, between the Established Church of *England*, and your selves. Because I have shewn, that there are opposite Sets or Parties of Ministers amongst us; and that the Layety in following some one Party, and some another, do most certainly, on one side or other, oppose their proper Ministers. For wheresoever there is an
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opposition of the People to their proper Ministers, doubtless there is a *Schism*.

Now it cannot be determined, on which Party of Ministers and their respective followers, this *Schism* must be charged; unless it be first known, which Party of Ministers are the proper Ministers of the People. For 'tis evident, that both of these opposite Parties amongst us, cannot be the proper Ministers of the People. Wherefore, before we pretend to charge the present *Schism* upon either side; it must be determined, whether the Ministers of the Established Church, or the Ministers of your Party, are the proper Ministers of the People. In order to the Resolution of which important Question, 'twill be necessary for me to give a fair and impartial State of the Case between us; and this I shall do in the following manner.

When this Kingdom had been for several Ages over-run with *Papish* Idolatry and Superstition; it pleased God to dispose the hearts of our Prince, our Clergy, Nobility, Gentry, and Common-People, for a Reformation. And accordingly the glorious Work was speedily begun in a due and orderly manner, and happily carried on by several steps and degrees; till at length it was happily brought to perfection in the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign. All the false Doctrines, and idolatrous and superstitious Practices of the *Romish* Church, were then perfectly laid aside; and the whole Authority of the Church and State established such a National Religion, as was (by the confession of your own Party already shewn, from their words and daily practice) intirely pure from all sinful Mixtures; and agreeable to the Word of God, and approved by all the foreign Prote-

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stant Churches. This Establishment was completed and finished in the year 1562.

Now 'tis manifest, that all the Layety in *England* might at that time Lawfully join in the public Worship of God, prescribed by the then Established Liturgy; and there is no doubt, but that the Clergy of those times were then the only proper Ministers of the People of *England*. And had things alwaies gone on after the same manner; had no opposition ever been made to that Church-Settlement; had the Clergy of those times, and their Successors been permitted quietly to perform their Offices according to the Ecclesiastical Laws; and had all the People quietly performed their Duty, in joining with those their proper Ministers in the Established Church, and obeying the godly Directions of their Ministers concerning Spiritual Matters; had these things, I say, been done, 'tis plain, that there had been no *Schism* amongst us: but all the Christians in *England* would have lived in the practice of Church-Union, or Communion in perfect Love and Peace unto this day.

But alas! tho' the Establishment made in 1562 might have preserved us for ever in perfect Peace and Love, yet after this Establishment was legally settled by all imaginable Authority, both of Church and State; there arose up some in opposition to it, and kindled such a flame in this Church, as has never since been extinguished. There are now especially opposite Parties of Ministers formed; and the People side some with one Party, and some with the other; and consequently, on one side or other, there is at present a manifest opposition of the People to their proper Ministers; because

because both Parties of Ministers cannot be the proper Ministers of the People.

Now 'tis evident as the Light it self, that the present Clergy of the Established Church of *England*, are the true and lawful Successors of those ancient, undoubted, proper Ministers of the People in 1562, by a clear and unquestionable Line of Succession. And 'tis also evident as the Light it self, that the Ministers of your Party cannot pretend to be the Successors of those ancient, undoubted, proper Ministers in 1562; but are the Successors of those, who have set up themselves in opposition to those Ministers, and to the Establishment then made by all imaginable Authority both of Church and State.

This then is the true state of our present Case; and the Question now to be determin'd, is, Whether we, the Ministers of the Established Church, who are the true and lawful Successors of those ancient, undoubted, proper Ministers in 1562; or the Ministers of your Party, who are the Successors of such, as have set up themselves in opposition to the ancient, undoubted, proper Ministers, and to the Establishment so firmly settled in 1562; I say, the Question is, Whether we, or your selves, and the rest of your Brethren, are now the proper Ministers of the People of *England*. To this Question therefore I shall endeavor to return a satisfactory Answer, by making one plain and easy Supposition.

Suppose two Men did in the year 1701, contend about an Estate; and both Parties were agreed, that in 1562 such a certain person had an undoubted right to this Estate, and was actually possessed of it. In this Case, if one of the present contending Parties can prove, that he is the true

and lawful Successor of him, who was the true owner and possessor of this Estate in 1562; doubtless the whole World will agree, that this Party is now the proper owner of this Estate, and has an unquestionable title to it.

And accordingly, since there are amongst us two opposite Parties of Ministers; and the Question is, which of these Parties of Ministers are the proper Ministers of the People; 'tis plain, that in this Case, that Party of Ministers who are the true and lawful Successors of those ancient, undoubted, proper Ministers in 1562, are now the proper Ministers of the People. And since 'tis manifest beyond all possibility of contradiction, that we, the present Ministers of the Established Church, are the true and lawful Successors of those ancient, undoubted, proper Ministers in 1562: therefore it plainly follows, that we, the present Ministers of the Established Church, are now the proper Ministers of the People of *England*.

And since I have shewn, that there is in *England* an opposition made to the proper Ministers of the People; that is, to us the Clergy of the Established Church, who are the proper Ministers of the People; therefore it plainly follows, that those who oppose us, are *Schismatics*. And consequently, the Ministers of your Party, and the People that follow them, are guilty of the present *Schism*, by opposing us the Clergy of the Established Church, who are the proper Ministers of the People of *England*.

'Tis true, if we the Clergy of the Established Church, did impose upon the People any one unlawful term of Lay-Communion with us; then the People might have a good excuse for their joining with you in opposition to us. But since the

the Case is apparently otherwise; since the People of *England* may constantly join with us their proper Ministers, without committing any the least sin thereby; therefore 'tis plain, that your leading them, and their following you, in opposition to us their proper Ministers, is a notorious breach of Church Peace and Love, a gross, and scandalous, and causeless *Schism*: and the guilt of it must fall heavy upon your own heads.

C H A P. XXIII.

That the Schism between the Established Church of England and the Dissenters, is to be charged on the Dissenters side; Thirdly, because the Dissenters are the cause of our being divided into opposite Parties, &c.

THirdly, Tho' it were granted against all Reason, that all your Ministers, as well as all ours, are validly Ordained; and tho' it were also granted against all Reason, that there is not in *England* any the least opposition of the People to their proper Ministers; but that both the Ministers of the Established Church, and those of your Party, are the true and lawful Successors of those ancient, undoubted, proper Ministers in 1562; and consequently, that your Ministers as well as ours, are now the proper Ministers of the People of *England*; I say, tho' all this were granted, in spite of what I have so plainly proved to the contrary; yet I have made it appear, that

there is a *Schism* notwithstanding, between the Established Church of *England*, and your selves.

For, tho' your Ministers as well as ours, were the proper Ministers of the People, yet I have proved (and daily experience confirms it) that the Layety, being headed and led on by their supposed proper Ministers, partly of our own, and partly of your Party; the Layety thus headed and led on, are divided into Parties, mutually condemning each other, practising opposite waies of Worship, opposing each other's Interest, endeavoring to gain Profelytes from each other; and in a word, openly quarreling with each other upon the account of Spiritual Matters. And this practice is most apparently *Schismatical*.

Now it cannot be determined, which Party the guilt of the present *Schism* is to be charged on; unless it be first known, thro' which Party's fault it happens, that we are not all perfectly agreed in the forementioned particulars. And this will easily appear, when the Case is fairly stated between us; and therefore I shall endeavor to do it in the following manner.

That National Uniformity in God's Public Worship, ought to be endeavored after in all National Churches, is a Principle commonly received, and extremely reasonable. This, to be sure, was once the judgment of your own Party; who when they had power, and hopes of effecting it in a manner agreeable to their own humor, did most earnestly labor for it. For when the Book of *Common-Prayer* was abolished, the *Directory* was established in its room: and the Preamble of the Ordinance for its establishment tells us, That the Lords and Commons did judge it *Necessary*, that the *Directory* should be established, and observed
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in all the Churches within this Kingdom. And accordingly it was Ordained (as the phrase then was) that the Directory for Public Worship—be henceforth used, pursued and observed, according to the true intent and meaning of this Ordinance, in all exercises of the Public Worship of God, in every Congregation, Church, Chappel, and place of Public Worship, within this Kingdom of England, and Dominion of Wales. And the Assembly of Divines, in the Preface to the Directory, declare that they agreed upon that Book, for this among other Reasons, viz. That they might give some public Testimony of their Endeavors for Uniformity in Divine Worship, which they had promised in their Solemn League and Covenant.

Nor is this Principle at present discarded by your own Party. Mr. Mead (and consequently, as I have often said, above fourscore of your greatest and ablest Teachers) speaking of Church Unity, (a) saies, That this Oneness is such in the inward Principles and outward Practices of Religion, as concerns the People of God jointly and reciprocally in their Church State, as joint Members of Christ, and one of another. And he (b) tells us, That God's doubling the promise in this Text (Ezek. 37. 19.) implies such a Union, as shall be both inward and outward, in Principle and Practice, in Affection and Action. I will make them one; that is, in Judgment and Principle. And they shall be one; that is, in Worship and Practice. For it is explained by that in Jer. 32. 39. I will give them one Heart, and one Way, that they may fear me for ever. One Heart without one Way is unfruitful; and one Way without one Heart is hypocritical; but one Heart and

(a) Two Sticks made one. p. 5. (b) Ibid. p. 6.

one way is no less than angelical. For thereby his Will is done on Earth, as it is in Heaven. For, as the same Person well (a) observes, *Then the Lord Christ reigns indeed, when his Church and People serve him with one consent, in one way, and in one Spirit. And therefore, when the Two Sticks are made one, it is said, Verse 24. David my servant shall be King over them; that is, shall reign in the Church more visibly, more powerfully, more gloriously than ever.*

It cannot be suppos'd indeed, that Mr. Mead thinks it the indispensable Duty of all the Christians in the World, to use the very same Method in the Public Service of God. Different Nations have different Customs; and they cannot be brought to follow the very same Rule in all the lesser Circumstances of Religion. But yet 'tis certainly most highly reasonable, that all the Christians of the same Nation should unite, not only in one Faith, but in one way of Public Worship too. And this seems to be Mr. Mead's Opinion, by his using these remarkable and excellent words, (b) *Now such a Union as this, for a People to be made one in one God, under one King, in one way of Repentance and Reformation, in one Covenant, and in one way of Worship; what a firm, what a spiritual, what a compleat, and consequently what a blessed Union must this be?*

You see, Gentlemen, how much this *Uniformity of Worship* is to be desir'd and endeavor'd after, in the judgment of your own Divines, both Ancient and Modern. And indeed our daily experience teaches us, That the different waies of

(a) Two Sticks made one, p. 22. (b) Ibid. p. 3, 4.

Public Worship amongst us, have caus'd numberless Jars and Quarrels, some Persons preferring this, and some the other way; and all disputing themselves and their Neighbors into Discord and Strife concerning the waies of God's Public Worship. This thing, in which we ought principally to agree, is what we have had such warm Contests about; such Contests as have almost expelled Charity out of the Kingdom, and crumbled this part of Christ's Mystical Body into dust; such Contests as have divided us even in our Temporal concerns, and made each Party hate and oppose all those, whom they do not think Favorers of their particular Opinions and Practices relating to God's Public Worship. Whereas, were there but one way of Public Worship amongst us; our Ecclesiastical Feuds had never been hatched, our Civil Divisions and Confusions had been prevented, and we had been a powerful and happy, because an united People.

The wisdom of the Nation in King *Edward* the Sixth's Daies, foresaw those miseries, which different waies in the Public Worship of God, would probably occasion: and they did what they were able, to lay a firm foundation for a lasting Unity amongst us. And that you may not pretend that they acted imprudently or irregularly; let me tell you, they proceeded herein by such Rules, as your own Party do acknowledge to be good, and agreeable to the mind of Christ.

For both the Presbyterian and Independent Ministers do (a) agree, 1, *That in order to Concord,*

(a) Heads of Agreement of the United Ministers, Lond. 1691, p. 13.

and in any other weighty and difficult Cases, it is needful and according to the mind of Christ, that the Ministers of several Churches be consulted and advised with about such Matters. 2. That such Meetings may consist of smaller or greater numbers, as the Matter shall require. Now, 1. The Establishment of a National Uniformity in God's Public Worship, is a most weighty and difficult Case, and is most apparently in order to Concord; and therefore 'tis needful, and according to the mind of Christ, that the Ministers of several Churches be consulted and advised with about it. 2. The business of a National Uniformity being a General and National concern, the Meeting for Consultation and Advice about it, ought to consist of the greatest number of Ministers, that is, of the whole Clergy of the Nation, as the Matter certainly requires.

And thus the Matter was transacted at that time. A Liturgy was compos'd, and agreed to by the whole Clergy of the Nation, as the best means of Uniformity in God's public Worship. This Liturgy was indeed abolished by Queen Mary; but in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's Reign, 'twas publish'd again for an Universal Order of all Public Divine Service, in all places of Public Worship throughout the Kingdom.

Now when the whole Clergy of the Nation have agreed upon something in a weighty and difficult Case, in order to Concord; your own Party do (a) declare, *That particular Churches, their respective Elders and Members ought to have a reverential regard to their Judgment so given, and*

(a) Heads of Agreement of the United Ministers, p. 13.

not dissent therefrom without apparent Grounds from the word of God. And consequently, according to your own Principles, all the People of *England* were then bound in Conscience to worship God according to the Order of the Liturgy; because it cannot be pretended, that they were forbidden by the Holy Scriptures so to do. However, to make the thing more solemn, and universally obliging, the Liturgy was established and enjoind by all the Authority and Power of the whole Nation, both Ecclesiastical and Civil. And consequently, there was as much necessity, that both Clergy and Layety should worship God in the use of the Liturgy; as could possibly arise from the strictest commands of all sorts of Lawful Superiors join'd together.

Thus then you see, that the Liturgy^l Worship, which is confessed to be agreeable to the Word of God, was duly settled in a manner agreeable to the Mind of Christ, and confirmed by unquestionable Authority; and consequently 'twas our bounden Duty to practise it. And had this Liturgy Worship been duly observed, the whole Nation had now been united in their way of Public Worship. But instead of this, we know that after the settlement of the Liturgy, there arose some warm Patrons of a different way of Public Worship. 'Twas your Party, Gentlemen, that was resolv'd to oppose the Established Liturgy, and to set up a sort of public Prayer, more agreeable to their own Humors and Fancies. 'Twas your Party, which first broke the Established Rule; and therefore our present want of a General and National Uniformity in God's Public Worship, is to be charged on your Party.

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'Tis true, had the Established Liturgy been such as the Layety could not safely join in, because 'twas contrary to God's Word; there had then been a necessity of setting up some other way of Public Worship. But this is by no means our present Case. You cannot deny, but that the Layety may safely join in the Use of our Liturgy. And therefore your Party is most plainly guilty of destroying a National Uniformity of Public Worship amongst us, by their making a needless and unreasonable Opposition to the Established Liturgy.

Besides, the Liturgy Worship is most strictly enjoined, and therefore must be retain'd; because the Clergy of the Established Church are not at liberty to disuse it. But your way of Worship is not enjoined, tho' the State permits it. And consequently there is no necessity of retaining it; but the Ministers of your own Party are at liberty to disuse it. Since then our different waies of Public Worship are utterly inconsistent with Uniformity of Public Worship; 'tis plain, that one of these different waies of Public Worship must cease, or else Uniformity cannot obtain amongst us. And since the Established Liturgy Worship cannot cease without destroying many of our Laws; therefore yours must and ought to cease, which tho' it be suffered by one Law, yet is not required by any. And consequently, your Party, which retains a different way of Public Worship, without any command so to do; is most evidently guilty of that Breach of Uniformity in Public Worship, which is at present too visible amongst us.

You'll say perhaps, that tho' your People can safely join in the use of the Established Liturgy,

as Lay-persons, yet your Pastors cannot use it, as Clergymen: and therefore they are obliged to use a different way of Public Worship. To this I answer,

First, That those Pastors may comply as Laymen; and surely 'tis most unreasonable, that the Established way of Worship should be opposed, and a contrary way of Worship set up, and Uniformity destroyed amongst us; because this or that Pastor cannot otherwise officiate as a Clergyman. Certainly the benefits of National Uniformity in God's Public Worship, are infinitely greater and more desirable, than this or that Man's discharge of the Ministerial Office.

Secondly, Tho' the Ministers of your own Party did object diverse things against the Liturgy in the years 1660, and 1661; yet they themselves preferred to read and use it as Clergymen, when some few alterations were made in it. And therefore, tho' it were granted, that there are some parts of the Prayers, &c. which the Pastors of your Party cannot read and use, as Clergymen; yet those parts are by your own confession extremely few; and they own'd, that they could safely read and use all the rest of the Liturgy; tho' they thought themselves obliged to omit such passages as they scrupled. Now if even this had been done, the mischief had been almost or wholly prevented. For the omission of a few words here and there, would have made so inconsiderable an alteration, as could hardly have been thought a difference in the way of Worship.

But instead of complying, as far as they confessed they were able, and doing what really lay in their power, to preserve Uniformity of Worship; instead of acting thus, I say, that chose to widen the breach, and their Successors have done
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the same ever since. Because you cannot use every line of the Liturgy, you would not use so much as one line of it; but set up a way of Worship, as directly opposite and contrary to the Established way, as 'tis possible to imagin one. And I must desire your selves, Gentlemen, and your Brethren, seriously to consider, whether this Method of proceeding be consistent with the great Christian Duty of studying those things which make for Peace.

Had the Ministers of your Party done what lay in their power by their own confession, this mischievous Diversity of Public Worship had been well-nigh, or totally prevented; but you have acted after such a manner, as makes Uniformity utterly impossible amongst us. For our parts, we of the Established Church do walk by that Rule, which we are bound by all that is sacred to observe, and which we cannot with a safe Conscience depart from: but you, Gentlemen, instead of complying in the use of the Liturgy, as far as you own you are able; have done your utmost to vilify and overthrow it, and in raise the People an utter aversion from it, by setting up and magnifying your *Extempore* way of Praying, in opposition to the Established Form.

If it be objected, That many passages in our Liturgy might have been altered, because several persons have excepted against them: I answer,

1. That none of those persons have proved these passages to be sinful; nor do your own Party generally think them such. Now if these passages be not sinful; then, I pray, where's the necessity of making alterations? unless you think it necessary to alter, whenever any person is pleased to object. And if this be once granted, we shall never be fixed; there will never be an end of altering.

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2. Tho' you alter for ever, yet you'll never be able to please every Man's fancy in a public Matter. Some think this, and some the other thing, more prudent and advisable. And if Men will destroy Uniformity of Public Worship, rather than comply with what their Governors have appointed, because they (forsooth) think it less proper, there is no way of preventing everlasting and infinite opposite waies of Public Worship in every part of the Catholic Church.

3. Since there is no necessity of altering those passages in the Liturgy, upon the account of any sinfulness in them; and since if alterations be made, every Man will never be satisfy'd: the Question is, What must be done? 'Tis plain, that these passages have been thought advisable and prudent, by those who first compiled, and approved the Liturgy: that is, by wiser and better Men, than any of those who object against them. And since all cannot have their particular judgment followed; truly, 'tis fit that the judgment of such Learned and Holy Persons should be preferred, rather than the judgment of such, as think it their wisdom to find fault with their Betters.

4. These passages are confirmed by ancient Custom or Law. And since we must stick to one way or other, which many will judge less convenient; certainly that way which Custom and Law have rendered sacred, ought to be retained. Since objections will be raised against whatever is prescribed; 'tis much more advisable, that the Governors should prescribe what must be objected against, than that inferiors should prescribe it to their Governors.

In a word, 'tis our Duty to comply with what is established, since it can be done without sin:
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rather than by our obstinacy to prevent the Uniformity of Public Worship, which is so extremely desirable in the judgment of all Parties, and is so necessary in order to Church Peace and Love. Wherefore the Rule of your own Party, *viz.* that particular Churches and Members ought not to dissent from the judgment of a Synod of Divines, without apparent grounds from the Word of God, is most highly reasonable. And if this Rule were duly practised here in *England*, there would soon be an end of our unhappy Disputes concerning the Expediency of some passages in the Liturgy.

If it be objected, That your Congregations will not bear with their Pastors using so much of the Liturgy, as they lawfully can; and therefore the Pastors must (in compliance with the People) use such a way of public Worship, as the People like; If, I say, this be objected, I answer, That 'tis the Pastors Duty, not to feed such mischievous and groundless humors, but to preach and reason their Congregations out of such fancies. And I am fully persuaded, that did your People think as well of our Liturgy, as their Teachers do; our present Quarrels would soon be composed, and our Divisions healed. And I am sure, it is not either doing justice to the Established Church, or dealing fairly by the People themselves, or endeavoring after Peace, thus to suffer Men to proceed in their hard Opinion of our Terms of Lay-Communion; and by silence to cherish those Notions, which if they were once removed, would soon unite us all in perfect Peace and Love.

From what has been said, it appears very plainly, that by keeping to the Established Liturgy, we might have preserved Uniformity of Public Worship, and a good Conscience together; and that

your own Party, by opposing the Liturgy, and setting up a contrary way of Public Worship, have utterly expelled Uniformity of Public Worship out of the Kingdom. 'Tis evident therefore, that 'tis thro' your Party's fault, that we are not all perfectly agreed concerning the way of God's Public Worship.

Now since there is a manifest *Schism* amongst us, occasioned by these opposite and contrary waies of worshipping God in public; 'tis plain, that the guilt of this *Schism* must be charged on your Party; who by preventing Uniformity in God's Worship, have both caused and increased, and do still with all possible Industry maintain the present most unchristian *Schism* between the Established Church of *England* and your selves, who of all the Modern Separatists do come nearest to her.

CHAP. XXIV.

That the Pretence of Toleration will not excuse the Dissenters from Schism, because 'tis an Impertinent Pretence.

F*ifthly*, I must now shew in the last place, that the Modern Pretences of *Toleration*, *Agreement in Fundamentals*, &c. will not excuse the Dissenters from being guilty of *Schism*.

I. I say, The Act of Toleration will not excuse you; and indeed it is utterly impertinent; and nothing at all to the purpose, for a Man to plead that Act in your behalf. For whosoever pleads that Act in your behalf, must believe and grant,
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either that you were Schismatics before that Act was made, or that you were not Schismatics before that Act was made. Now I shall prove, that whether you were Schismatics before that Act was made, or no; 'tis utterly impertinent, and nothing at all to the purpose for a Man to plead that Act in your behalf.

For that Pretence, Excuse or Plea, is utterly impertinent, and nothing at all to the purpose, which do's not in the least alter the Case, or make it in any wise either better or worse. Now the Act of Toleration do's not in the least alter the Case, or make it in any wise either better or worse; whether you were Schismatics before that Act was made, or no.

'Tis true, it alters your Case, and makes it better, with respect to the Temporal punishment of *Schism*: but you know, we do not now dispute concerning the Temporal punishment, but concerning the Crime and Charge of *Schism*; that is, whether you do now lie under the Guilt of *Schism*, or no. And I affirm, and shall endeavor to prove, that the Act of Toleration do's not in the least alter your Case, or make it in any wise either better or worse, with respect to the Guilt of *Schism*; whether you were Schismatics before that Act was made, or no.

First, The Act of Toleration do's not in the least alter your Case, or make it in any wise either better or worse, if you were not Schismatics before that Act was made. For 'tis not pretended by us, who charge you with *Schism*, that the Act of Toleration do's now make you Schismatics, if you were not Schismatics before that Act was made: and therefore the Act of Toleration do's not alter your Case for the worse. And if you
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were perfectly innocent of the guilt of *Schism* before that Act was made; certainly that Act do's not alter your Case for the better, by making you less guilty of *Schism* now, than you were before. For no accus'd Person's Case can be better, nor can he be made less guilty, than when he is perfectly innocent of the Crime laid to his charge. And consequently the Act of Toleration do's not alter your Case either for the better, or for the worse; if you were not Schismatics before that Act was made.

Secondly, The Act of Toleration do's not in the least alter your Case, or make it in any wise either better or worse; if you were Schismatics before that Act was made. Because the Act of Toleration do's not, and cannot change the nature, or take away the guilt of your former *Schism*. That this great Truth may fully appear, I shall distinctly prove these three things.

1. That all the Dissenters in *England* are now obliged by the Acts for Uniformity to join with the Established Church, notwithstanding the Act of Toleration, as much as ever they were before the Act of Toleration was made.

2. That, tho' the Act of Toleration did really free some Dissenters from that Obligation to join with the Established Church, which the Acts for Uniformity did formerly lay upon them; yet the Act of Toleration do's not free the greatest part of our Dissenters from that Obligation.

3. That, tho' the Act of Toleration did really free all the Dissenters in *England* from all that Obligation to join with the Established Church, which the Acts for Uniformity did formerly lay upon them; yet all the Dissenters in *England* are Schismatics notwithstanding.

C H A P. XXV.

That the Dissenters are obliged by the Acts for Uniformity to join with the Established Church, notwithstanding the Act of Toleration.

First then I must prove, that all the Dissenters in *England* are now obliged by the Acts for Uniformity to join with the Established Church, notwithstanding the Act of Toleration, as much as ever they were before the Act of Toleration was made. And consequently, tho' it were granted, that your Party, who are now suppos'd to have been Schismatics before the Act of Toleration was made, were then Schismatics for no reason but this, *viz.* because the Acts for Uniformity did then oblige them to join with the Established Church; I say, tho' this were granted, which I shall afterwards prove to be false: yet you are still Schismatics notwithstanding the present Act of Toleration. Because I think I can make it appear, that the Acts for Uniformity do now oblige you to join with the Established Church, as much as ever they did before the Act of Toleration was made.

Gentlemen, It cannot be imagin'd, that the Acts for Uniformity are repealed by the Act of Toleration. All that can be pretended, is only a bare Suspension of certain Penal Clauses of the Acts for Uniformity: but there is not one syllable of those Acts for Uniformity repeal'd.

However, that I may not dispute about words; suppose it were granted, that a Suspension is a down-right

right and absolute repeal of that part of a Law, which is suspended; yet it is evident as the Light, that all and every part of the Acts for Uniformity are not suspended by the Act of Toleration. The very words of the Act of Toleration do plainly declare, that some certain Clauses only of the Acts for Uniformity are thereby suspended; and all those Clauses which are thereby suspended, are therein expressly mention'd.

And therefore all those Clauses of the Acts for Uniformity, which are not said to be suspended in the Act of Toleration, do still oblige all the People of *England* to observe and keep them. And consequently, all the People of *England* are now obliged to observe and keep all those Clauses of the Acts for Uniformity, which did formerly oblige them to join with the Established Church. Because none of those Clauses, which did formerly oblige them to join with the Established Church, are suspended by the Act of Toleration; but do still oblige them to join with the Established Church, as much as ever they formerly did, before the Act of Toleration was made.

This Assertion, Gentlemen, I take to be so evidently true, that I verily believe, none who has ever seen, compared, and considered the Acts for Uniformity, and the Act of Toleration, can deny it. But yet, to make this Matter, if possible, somewhat plainer, give me leave to be more particular.

In the Act for Uniformity there are two Parts; viz. *First*, The Preceptive or Commanding: *Secondly*, The Penal or Punishing Part. Now the Act of Toleration has indeed suspended the Penal or Punishing Part of the Acts for Uniformity, by declaring that Men shall not be punished for Non-

C H A P. XXV.

That the Dissenters are obliged by the Acts for Uniformity to join with the Established Church, notwithstanding the Act of Toleration.

First then I must prove, that all the Dissenters in *England* are now obliged by the Acts for Uniformity to join with the Established Church, notwithstanding the Act of Toleration, as much as ever they were before the Act of Toleration was made. And consequently, tho' it were granted, that your Party, who are now suppos'd to have been Schismatics before the Act of Toleration was made, were then Schismatics for no reason but this, *viz.* because the Acts for Uniformity did then oblige them to join with the Established Church; I say, tho' this were granted, which I shall afterwards prove to be false: yet you are still Schismatics notwithstanding the present Act of Toleration. Because I think I can make it appear, that the Acts for Uniformity do now oblige you to join with the Established Church, as much as ever they did before the Act of Toleration was made.

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Conformity, by virtue of such and such Clauses in the Acts for Uniformity. But the Act of Toleration do's not suspend one syllable of those Clauses, which contain the Preceptive or Commanding part of the Acts for Uniformity.

Nay, the very Title of that which we call the Act of Toleration, runs thus, *An Act for Exempting their Majesties Protestant Subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of certain Laws.* From which it appears, that our Law-givers did indeed design to suspend the Penal part of the Acts for Uniformity; but they did not intend to suspend one syllable of the Preceptive or Commanding part of those Acts. And consequently, those Clauses of the Acts for Uniformity, which contain the Preceptive or Commanding part, do still bind all *English Men* to Obedience, notwithstanding what we call the Act of Toleration.

Now if the Preceptive or Commanding part of the Acts for Uniformity do still oblige, as much as ever; then 'tis our Duty to obey the Preceptive or Commanding part of those Acts, as much as ever. And since 'tis now supposed and acknowledged, that you were once bound by the Preceptive or Commanding part of those Acts, to join with the Established Church; therefore you are now bound by the same Preceptive or Commanding part to do the same thing, as much as ever. And consequently, you are now *Schismatics*, for disobeying the Preceptive or Commanding part of those Acts for Uniformity, as much as ever you were before the Act of Toleration was made.

Nay (what I think is observable) the Preamble of the Second Act for Uniformity, made in the 14 *Car. II.* calls the Dissenters absenting themselves

selves from the Common Prayer, *Schismatical*. And consequently, your absenting your selves from the Common Prayer is now *Schismatical*, as much as ever, in the Eye of our present Law-givers. Because they have not altered or contradicted that Expression, but suffered it to continue in the Body of our Laws; and thereby declared themselves to be of the same opinion with those, who made that Second Act for Uniformity.

But I shall not lay any stress upon this Observation; because (whether our Law-givers do think fit to call your present Separation from our Assemblies *Schismatical* in expresse terms, or no) this is certain, that they have not suspended those Clauses of the Acts for Uniformity, which did once make it your Duty to come to our Churches; and which did once make you *Schismatics*, if you absented your selves from them. And therefore those Clauses of the Acts for Uniformity do now make it your Duty to come to our Churches, and do now make you *Schismatics*, for your present Separation. 'Tis true, the Act of Toleration has now eased you of those Penalties, which were formerly inflicted on you, for being *Schismatics*, by suspending the Penal part of the Acts for Uniformity: but the precepts for Uniformity do still remain good and firm, tho' the penalties for Non-Conformity are ceased: and your Disobedience to those Precepts for Uniformity is now *Schismatical*, as much as ever; tho' your Disobedience to those Precepts, that is, your Non-Conformity, is not at present so prejudicial to your Estates, as it was formerly.

If it be objected, that when the Penal part of a Statute is suspended, we are then no longer obliged to keep the Preceptive part of it: I answer, That

the Suspension of the Penal part of a Statute do's not take away our obligation to keep the Preceptive part of it. Because the reason why Men are bound to obey their Governors, is founded upon their Governors having authority to command: And therefore, whensoever Governors do command, the Subjects must obey, whether they shall be punished for their disobedience, or no.

'Tis true, Men are generally so perverse and stubborn, that they will not obey the commands of their Governors, unless they be driven to it by the fear of Punishment; and therefore 'tis generally requisite, that Laws should be enforced by Temporal Penalties. But yet, if Governors shall at any time make a Law without annexing a Penalty, the Subjects are bound to keep that Law. For Men ought to obey without force; tho' they seldom do so. Because the obligation is firm and good, tho' never enforced by a Penalty. Penalties do enforce the observation of Laws: but Penalties do not give Laws their obliging Power.

St. Paul tells the *Romans*, that they must needs be subject, *not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake*, Rom. 13. 5. From whence we learn that Men ought to obey out of a Principle of Conscience, and not for Fear only. He that do's not obey, unless when he fears the wrath of his Prince, that is, some Punishment for his Disobedience, do's not practise this Rule, but obeys for Wrath only, and not at all for Conscience sake. Wherefore, since the Preceptive parts of the Acts for Uniformity, are now a part of our Laws, as much as ever; certainly you are now thereby obliged in Conscience to join with the Established Church; tho' you are not now in danger of your Prince's

Prince's wrath for not joining with us. And if you do not now join with us, you do certainly break the Apostle's Rule, and declare, that your Obedience is founded upon Fear, and not upon that Principle of Conscience, which St. Paul requires.

Besides, you know, Gentlemen, that Laws are sometimes enacted, without any mention made of a Penalty for the breach of them. Now it cannot be said, that those Laws are no Laws, because they are not enforced by Penalties. And if they are Laws, then Men are obliged to observe them, and are guilty of sin if they disobey them. And accordingly, tho' the Penalties of the Acts for Uniformity are now taken away, yet those Acts are Laws still as much as ever; and consequently, Men are now bound to observe them, and are now guilty of *Schism* if they disobey them, as much as ever.

I know it has been said, that a Sanction or Penalty is necessary to the essence of a Law; and that without such a Sanction or Penalty no Law can bind a Man to observe it. And accordingly we are told, that the Dissenters are not now bound to observe the Acts for Uniformity, because the Penalties of those Acts are now suspended by the Act of Toleration. Gentlemen, this notion is very absurd; but yet I shall not trouble my self to examin and confute it; because I am unwilling to enter upon a needless dispute. Wherefore upon supposition, that some Penalty or other is necessary to the essence of a Law, I answer, that there is some sort of Penalty to secure obedience to the Acts for Uniformity, notwithstanding the present Toleration.

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For a penalty may be either Temporal or Eternal: but either of these penalties is a true penalty. And if a Law has a true penalty, 'tis sufficient; tho' the Temporal penalty be wanting. It cannot be pretended, that a double penalty is necessary to the essence of a Law. 'Tis true, when God has fixed one penalty, the Governor may fix another to enforce the observation of a Law: but if the Governor do fix no penalty, yet the Law has a penalty, because God has fixed one. And consequently, a Law is a true Law, and binds Men to Obedience, tho' the Governor do not fix a Temporal penalty for the breach of that Law.

Now God has establish'd one general Eternal penalty, *viz.* Eternal Damnation, to secure Obedience to all Laws. He has declared in his Word, those shall be damned, who disobey the Lawful Commands of their Governors. Now this penalty of Damnation belongs to the Acts for Uniformity, as well as to other Laws. And consequently, Men are now bound to obey the Acts for Uniformity, under the penalty of Damnation.

'Tis indeed generally convenient, that a Temporal penalty should be fixed for the breach of all Laws; because the Eternal penalty will not terrify all Persons. Some Persons are more afraid of suffering here, than of suffering hereafter; and will do more to save a hundred pounds, than to save their Souls. But yet a penalty is a penalty, tho' some Men do not fear it. You'll easily grant, that Hanging is a penalty, tho' some Villains will not startle at it. And consequently, Damnation is a penalty, tho' it will not, and do's not terrify those that little dream on't, or will not consider it. And since the penalty of Damnation do's still belong to the Acts for Uniformity; certainly none can
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Chap. XXV. *A Discourse of Schism.* III

say, that those Acts do want a penalty to secure Obedience to them, tho' the Temporal penalties are removed by the Act of Toleration.

In a word, *St. Paul* tells us, that we must obey the higher Powers, because *there is no Power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordained of God; whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation, Rom. 13. 1, 2.* Wherefore all those lawful things, which the higher Powers do command, are in reality God's Commands; and whosoever disobeyes God's Commands, shall undoubtedly be punished hereafter, tho' he escape punishment here. And consequently, the Acts for Uniformity are arm'd with God's Authority; and whosoever resists the Commands deliver'd in those Acts, resists God's Authority, and must expect to suffer a penalty hereafter, tho' the Act for Toleration has excus'd him from suffering any penalty in this present World.

From what has been said, I think, it plainly appears, That the Acts for Uniformity do still oblige you to Obedience, as much as ever; tho' you are not now liable to those penalties for your Disobedience to those Acts, which did formerly enforce the observation of them. And consequently, if you were formerly obliged by those Acts for Uniformity to join with the Established Church; you are still obliged to do the same. And if you were formerly Schismatics for disobeying those Acts; you are still Schismatics for the same reason, notwithstanding the present Act of Toleration.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXVI.

That, tho' the Act of Toleration did free some Dissenters from the Obligation of the Acts for Uniformity, yet the greatest part of the Dissenters are not thereby freed from that Obligation.

S*ECONDLY*, I am now to shew, that tho' the Act of Toleration did free some Dissenters from that obligation to join with the Established Church, which the Acts for Uniformity did formerly lay upon them: yet the Act of Toleration do's not free the greatest part of our Dissenters from that obligation.

For the Preamble of the Act of Toleration shews, that that Act was designed and intended for the ease of scrupulous Consciences only; whereas the greatest part of our Dissenters cannot pretend, that they have scrupulous Consciences. Because I have already shewn from the Writings and Actions of the modern Dissenters themselves, that they do generally own it to be Lawful for them to join in Lay-Communion with the Established Church of *England*: and therefore they cannot say, that their Consciences do scruple the Lawfulness of joining in Lay-Communion with us.

'Tis true, many Persons have taken a most unwarrantable liberty of separating from the Established Church, under the shelter of this Act of Toleration, which was not made for their sakes; but such Persons are by no means excusable upon that account. For tho' they may be crafty and lucky enough, to make an ill use of a Law against
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the design of it, and to escape punishment for such practices: yet certainly the Pretence of that Law which they abuse, will not excuse their action in the sight of God. For whatever excuse may be made for some truly scrupulous Persons, upon the foot of Toleration; certainly the Act of Toleration do's not lessen the Crime of those, who because they have not scrupulous Consciences, do not come within the number of such as that Law was enacted for.

Wherefore, tho' our Governors had by the Act of Toleration freed the scrupulous Dissenters from the obligation of the Acts for Uniformity; yet they have not freed those Dissenters, who have not scrupulous Consciences, from that obligation. And since the greatest part of our Dissenters have not scrupulous Consciences; therefore the obligation of the Acts for Uniformity do's still lie upon them; and they are now as strictly bound to join with the Established Church of *England*, as ever they were before the Act of Toleration was made.

And consequently, if such Persons as do not scruple the Lawfulness of our Terms of Lay-Communion, were formerly made Schismatics by the Acts for Uniformity; or if (as 'tis now supposed) they were formerly Schismatics before the Act of Toleration was made: then without doubt they are Schismatics still, notwithstanding the Act of Toleration. Because the Acts for Uniformity do still oblige them to join with the Established Church; and the Act of Toleration do's not release them from that obligation.

C H A P. XXVII.

That, tho' all the Dissenters were by the Act of Toleration wholly freed from the Obligation of the Acts for Uniformity; yet all the Dissenters are Schismatics notwithstanding.

THUS far, Gentlemen, I have argu'd upon this Supposition, *viz.* That your Party (who are now suppos'd to have been Schismatics before the Act of Toleration was made) were then Schismatics for no other reason but this, *viz.* because the Acts for Uniformity did then oblige them to join with the Established Church. And tho' this Supposition were acknowledged for truth, yet I have shewn, 1. That the Acts for Uniformity do still oblige your Party to join with the Established Church, as much as ever they did before the Act of Toleration was made. 2. That tho' some few of your Party were by the Act of Toleration wholly excused from the obligation of the Acts for Uniformity; yet the greatest part of them are not excused by it.

Now, tho' what I have said in discoursing upon these particulars, is in my opinion very convincing; yet I shall not lay the stress of my Cause upon it. For I shall now prove,

Thirdly, That tho' the Act of Toleration did really free all the Dissenters in *England* from that obligation to join with the Established Church, which the Acts for Uniformity did formerly lay upon them; yet all the Dissenters in *England* are Schismatics notwithstanding.

For

For the reason why your Party (who are supposed to have been Schismatics before the Act of Toleration was made) were then Schismatics, is grounded upon God's Law. And therefore, tho' it were granted, that our Governors did properly and truly repeal all and every part of the Acts for Uniformity, by making the Act of Toleration; which notwithstanding I have proved that they have not done: and tho' those Acts for Uniformity did not now oblige all or any of your Party to join in Communion with the Established Church; notwithstanding I have already proved they do: I say, tho' these things were granted, yet I affirm, that if you were Schismatics before the Act of Toleration was made, then you are still Schismatics notwithstanding the Act of Toleration. Because 'tis not in the power of our Governors to change the nature, or take away the guilt of your former *Schism*, by any Act of Toleration whatsoever.

Schism is an offence against the Law of God; and therefore the nature of it do's not depend upon the changeable Will of our Superiors, but upon the eternal and immutable Will of God. *Schism* is a breach of Church Peace and Love; and a breach of Church Peace and Love will alwaies be a breach of Church Peace and Love, let our Governors say or tolerate what they please. And therefore 'tis not in the power of our Governors to make that become no *Schism*, which once was *Schism*. From hence then it appears, that *Schism* has an unalterable nature, as well as other crimes; and that what was once *Schism* is alwaies such, any Act of Toleration to the contrary notwithstanding.

And since our Governors cannot alter the nature of *Schism* by an Act of Toleration; it follows, that they cannot take away the guilt of *Schism* by an Act
of

of Toleration. For Church-Peace and Love are Christian Duties. Now 'tis true, that our Governors may enjoin a Christian Duty, and forbid a Sin. Thus for Instance, Justice in our dealings is a Christian Duty, and common Swearing is a Sin; and our Governors may forbid the one, and enjoin the other. But yet 'tis our Duty to be just in our dealings, whether our Governors enjoin it, or no: and 'tis a Sin to swear in common Discourse, whether our Governors do forbid it, or no. And accordingly Church-Peace and Love are Christian Duties, whether our Governors do enjoin it, or no; and *Schism* is a Sin, whether our Governors forbid it, or no. And consequently, 'tis now a Sin for you to break Church-Peace and Love, that is, to practise *Schism*, tho' the Act of Toleration declares that our Governors will not punish you for it.

Now since what was once *Schism*, is alwaies such; 'tis plain, that if you were Schismatics before the Act of Toleration; then you are Schismatics still. Because an Act of *Parliament* cannot make that to become no *Schism*, which once was a *Schism* in its own nature. And since *Schism* is a Sin, whether our Governors do punish it, or no; 'tis plain, that you are now guilty of *Schism*, as well as before, tho' our Governors do not now punish you for the guilt, as they did before.

'Tis true; Were our obligation to the practise of Church-Peace and Love, founded upon nothing but the Acts for Uniformity; then the repeal of the Acts for Uniformity would take away our obligation to the practise of those duties; and consequently *Schism* would cease, when the Acts for Uniformity ceased. But I have proved, and all your own Writers do grant, that our obligation to the practise of Church-Peace and Love is founded upon the Law of God;
and

and consequently you are obliged to practise those Duties, whether our Governors do enjoin them, or no; and whether our Governors do punish the breach of those Duties, or no. Wherefore, if you were Schismatics before the Act of Toleration was made, because you were then guilty of the breach of Church-Peace and Love; then you are Schismatics still for the same reason, *viz.* because you do still break the same Duties.

Gentlemen, what I have said concerning this Point, will be still clearer, if I put some particular Cases of *Schism*: and therefore I beg leave to remind you of the Cases already put in the beginning of this Discourse.

1. I have proved, that there is a *Schism* in the Church, when those who are not validly Ordained, do usurp the Ministerial Office. And I appeal to your selves, Gentlemen, whether any Act of Toleration can make it Lawful for such Persons to act as Clergymen.

Now I have proved, that the Ministers of your Party are not validly Ordained; and consequently, tho' our Governors do suffer your People to follow such Leaders; yet both the Leaders and the Followers are most certainly guilty of *Schism*, notwithstanding such a Toleration.

2. I have proved, that there is a *Schism* in the Church; when the People do oppose their proper Ministers, and adhere to others in opposition to them. And I appeal to your selves, Gentlemen, whether it be not a damnable sin so to do. Now I have prov'd, that your Party are guilty of this practice; and consequently, since your practice is a damnable sin, 'tis not in the power of our Governors to make it Lawful by any Toleration whatsoever.

3. I have prov'd, that there is a *Schism* in the Church, when it is divided into opposite Parties, &c. And I have shewn, that this is our unhappy fate: and that the Dissenters are the causes of our being thus divided. Now I appeal to your selves, Gentlemen, whether such opposite Parties in a Church be consistent with Church-Peace and Love; and also whether it be in the power of our Governors to make it Lawful for Christians thus to quarrel with one another, by any Act of Toleration whatsoever.

Thus then you see, that the pretence of Toleration is utterly impertinent, and nothing at all to the purpose; because it do's not, and cannot in the least alter your Case, or make it in any wise either better or worse. For, if you were not Schismatics before that Act was made, 'tis ridiculous to excuse your selves by pleading that Act. But if you were Schismatics before that Act was made, then you are Schismatics still notwithstanding the Act of Toleration.

C H A P. XXVIII.

That the Act of Toleration is not thought an excuse for Schism, but an impertinent Pretence, by the Dissenting Teachers themselves.

Gentlemen, I might have been much more large in the Examination of this Pretence of Toleration, had I not been verily persuaded, that you your selves do not think, and will not say, that the Pretence of Toleration is a pertinent Plea. For whatever may be talk'd in private by the Teachers of your own Party, and whatever notions those People may have who frequent your Meetings; I am really of opinion,

Chap. XXVIII. *A Discourse of Schism.* 119

opinion, that your own ablest Divines will, when they are driven to it, confess and own, that the Act of Toleration do's not in the least alter the Case, or make it in any wise either better or worse. And consequently, this popular Pretence of Toleration is impertinent, and you do not, and cannot think it an excuse for *Schism*. You cannot but know and acknowledge, that if there was a *Schism* between the Established Church and your selves, before the Act of Toleration was made, then there is still a *Schism* between our selves and you, notwithstanding the Act of Toleration. And I think, Gentlemen, I have at least two substantial Reasons for this my Opinion.

1. You cannot but know, that since this Act of Toleration was made, Mr. Norris printed his *Christian Blessedness*, wherein he charged the Dissenters with *Schism*. For this Charge he was plentifully railed at and condemned; and therefore he was forced in vindication of himself to publish his *Charge of Schism continued*, being a justification of the Author of *Christian Blessedness*, for his charging the Separatists with *Schism*, notwithstanding the Toleration.

2. In this Book Mr. Norris (a) saies, *I wish that some of those who are intens'd against our Author (meaning himself) and so free of their Censures upon that part of his Book, would have took the courage to appear against him in public; which would have been a much Fairer and more Manly way, than either to rail at him in corners (which, by the way, are as little sought for by Charity, as by Truth) or to pester him with scurrilous and abusive Letters without Names. This argues their fear to be as great as their malice; and that they diffide either to their Cause, or to their Skill in managing it. The truth is, they ought for their own*

(a) Norris's Charge of Schism continued, Lond. 1698. p. 287.

Credit, as well as in Justice to the Author, either to have suppress'd their Resentments, or to have vented 'em in public. Which if they had done, I dare undertake, they should not have been disappointed of an Adversary.

Nay, Mr. Norris charges the Dissenters, not only with Schism, but (a) with the most unjust and unreasonable Schism, that ever was made in the Christian Church; and tells (b) you, that He is ready against any Opposer to make it good. And he concludes that Treatise with these words, If any one of the Learned among the Dissenting Party thinks the Argument of this Discourse may be answer'd, and withal thinks himself qualify'd for the Undertaking (for I declare before-hand, that I shall not think my self concerned to answer every impertinent Scribler) I fairly and freely invite him to it; and withal do promise him for his better encouragement, that he shall find me either able to defend what I have written, or willing to submit.

Gentlemen, This was a solemn Challenge to your whole Party; and why, I pray, was this Challenge never accepted? Why has none of your Learned Men engaged so fair an Adversary? It cannot be pretended, that what Mr. Norris has urged, has been answer'd in some of your former Books; because Mr. Norris's Book is full of such Arguments, as I dare say, none of your Writers have ever considered and treated of. And I desire you, Gentlemen, to shew me the contrary, and to point out the places, if you can.

No, Gentlemen, 'tis plain, that Mr. Norris never was, because he never can be answer'd; and your Brethren know it too, and therefore they dare not make the Experiment, and break their Teeth in the Con-

(a) Norris's Charge of Schism continued, Lond. 1698. p. 334.

(b) Ibid. p. 335.

troverſy. The pretence of Toleration may indeed ſerve to amuſe an unthinking multitude: but you do not, and cannot believe it will hold water.

2. The practice of your own Party plainly proves, that in the opinion of your own Teachers, the Act of Toleration cannot be pleaded as an excuſe from the guilt of *Schiſm*. You know, Gentlemen, with what warmth your Profeſſors charged thoſe who ſeparated from them with *Schiſm*, in the times of the great Rebellion. And this they did notwithſtanding the Toleration then granted. But, I confeſs, the Diſſenters do not now ſtand by the Doctrine of thoſe times; and therefore I muſt not expect, that you will be concluded by the judgment and example of your Predeceſſors. But there is a much later proof of what I affirm.

I have already told you, that the Presbyterians and Independents were, by the confeſſion of both Parties, in a moſt grievous *Schiſm* in 1691. They then ſolemnly faſted and prayed for the Pardon of that *Schiſm*. They drew up *Heads of Agreement* and ſubſcribed them, to heal that *Schiſm*. And ſince the making of that Union, they are broken to pieces again, and are relapſed into their former *Schiſm*. And all this has happened between your ſelves, ſince the Act of Toleration.

Now, if the Toleration of different Parties takes away the *Schiſm* between thoſe Parties, and joins them together in Chriſtian Unity; I pray, how came the Presbyterians and Independents to be guilty of ſo grievous a *Schiſm* by their own confeſſion, notwithſtanding the preſent Toleration? And if the preſent Toleration do's not take away the *Schiſm* between the Presbyterians and Independents; and do's not join thoſe two Parties in Chriſtian Unity: I pray, how do's the preſent Toleration take away the

Schism between us of the Established Church, and the Dissenters of those Persuasions? Or, how do's this Toleration join us of the Established Church, and the Dissenters of those Persuasions in Christian Unity?

'Tis plain to me, Gentlemen, for the Reasons already given, that neither the Presbyterians nor the Independents do believe, that the Act of Toleration is a pertinent Pretence, or that it can be an excuse for *Schism*.

C H A P. XXIX.

Three other Pretences examined.

II. **T**IS said, that the Established Church of England and the Dissenters, do agree in *Fundamentals*, and therefore there is no *Schism* between them; and consequently, the Dissenters are not Schismatics. To this I answer, That the profession of the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion do's indeed make a Man no Heretic; but it do's not make him no Schismatic. For *Schism* is not a denial of Fundamentals, but a breach of Church-Peace and Love: and we find by daily experience, that he who professes all the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion may cause such a breach, and raise a disturbance in the Church.

Besides, St. Paul tells us, that there was a *Schism* between the several Parties at Corinth, 1 Cor. i. and yet all those Parties were Christians, and consequently did all agree in Fundamentals. And you know there was, and is, a *Schism* between the Presbyterians and Independents; and yet they did, and do, agree in Fundamentals, for otherwise they would not be Chri-

Christians. From which Instances 'tis plain, that there may be a *Schism* between those who agree in Fundamentals.

But I need not enlarge in so plain a case; especially since a late Writer of your own (a) saies, *We do not think, nor do our Ministers teach,* that Oneness in Doctrine is enough to justify separation in outward Communion from being Schismatical; and had we no greater thing to warrant our separation from you (of the Church of England) we should not think our selves innocent.*

'Tis plain then, that notwithstanding your agreement with us in *Fundamentals*, there is a *Schism* between our selves and you; and I think it appears from what I have said, that this *Schism* is to be charged on your side.

III. 'Tis said, That if we of the Established Church are not *Schismatics* for our separation from the *Papists*; then the Dissenters are not *Schismatics* for their separation from us. But I answer, That the Case is vastly different. For the *Papists* have forced us to separate from them, by imposing unlawful Terms of Lay-Communion with them. And when the Dissenters have shewn, that the Established Church do's impose any one unlawful Term of Lay-Communion with her; then we shall freely grant, that they are not *Schismatics* for their Separation from us.

IV. 'Tis said, That Episcopal Government is Devilish and Antichristian; and therefore the Dissenters are obliged to separate from the Established Church, which retains it. Gentlemen, 'twere easy to prove not only the Lawfulness, but the Duty of Retaining Episcopal Government amongst us; but I shall content my self with giving you an Answer to

(a) Letter to Mr. Burscough, p. 52.

this Pretence, which is made ready to my hands by an Eminent Person of your own Party, who (a) saies, *All that I desire of you is only this, that laying aside all passion, you will but pause and ponder what is alledged to give satisfaction to this Objection; which may cool at least the fierceness of your spirits, and abate the desperate prejudice you have conceived against the Government and Worship established in these Churches. Touching the exercise of Ecclesiastical Government in general, you know it is of absolute necessity to the Constitution of a Church. And as to the Government of the Churches by Bishops (speaking of it only as they are superior to Presbyters, without meddling with the extent of their Dioceses, &c.) when you find so much written with so much confidence, that Episcopacy is the true, ancient, Apostolical Government of the Christian Church; that it was received in profession and practice in all Ages, and is so far Divine, that Bishops were in the very time of the Apostles; that they were ordained and appointed by the Apostles themselves; that there was an approved succession of them in the Apostolical Churches; that in all the following Ages all the Churches in the World were governed by them for more than fifteen hundred years, without any opposition, save by the Arrian Acrius, who was therefore cried down as an Heretic by the ancient Fathers; that the first Reformed Protestant Churches cast not off Episcopacy with any averfeness to the Order, as appears by the History of the Augustane Confession, to which Calvin himself signed; that some of these Churches are governed by Superintendents, the same with Bishops; that there was long since a challenge made to them that have any averfeness to the Degree or Order, in these words, We require you to find but one Church upon the face of*

(a) Dr. Bryan's Dwelling with God, p. 304. &c.

the Earth, that hath not been ordered by Episcopal Regiment, *which to this day, as they say, is not answered: These allegations may, methinks, so far allay your heat, as to restrain your Thoughts and Tongues from passing so sore a censure upon the Government, that it is Devilish and Antichristian, till you can solidly absolve all these Arguments.*

CH A P. XXX.

The pretence of Conscience examined.

V. **T**IS said to be against the Consciences of the Dissenters to join with the Established Church; and that it cannot be Schismatical for a Man to act according to his Conscience. To this I answer,

1. None can make this pretence, but those who think our Terms of Lay-Communion to be absolutely sinful. And I am satisfied, and have fully proved, that very few of the Dissenters are of this Opinion. And consequently all the Dissenters, except those very few, are Schismatics.

2. As for those Dissenters, who do really think that our Terms of Lay-Communion are absolutely sinful, their Consciences are erroneous. They judge that to be contrary to God's Word, which is not in reality contrary to it. But their false judgment do's not alter the nature of things, or make a sin to become no sin. And therefore, since our Terms of Lay-Communion are most certainly Lawful; 'tis most certainly a sin for them to separate from us, whatever their mistaken Consciences do judge on't.

Our Savior tells his Disciples of some, that would think they did God service by killing them; and *St. Paul* thought he did well in persecuting the Saints.

I ;

You

You see the sad effects of a mistaken Conscience; and I take the Case of these Dissenters to be much the same. For they fancy they please God by making this most unchristian Separation from the Established Church, which has already done incredible mischiefs, and will probably do more. But you know, Gentlemen, that our Opinions of things do not make good things bad, or bad things good. And the mistaken Consciences of these Dissenters cannot make their present *Schism* to be no sin.

'Tis the Duty therefore of all those Dissenters, who plead Conscience for their Separation, to be very diligent and sincere in searching for the truth. If they have not done this, their mistaken Consciences will not only not prevent, but also not lessen their condemnation, for so great a crime as *Schism* is. But if they have done this; if they have honestly used their utmost endeavors to be rightly instructed concerning these Matters, and do still think it unlawful to join with the Established Church; I doubt not but God will pity and pardon their mistakes. Their Separation indeed is Schismatical; but I am persuaded, that our Heavenly Father will not impute their *Schism* to them, because 'twas impossible for them to discover the sin, and thereby to avoid the commission of it.

C H A P. XXXI.

The CONCLUSION.

AND now, Gentlemen, give me leave to join with a famous Non-Conformist, whom I have often quoted, in these his truly Christian words; (a) *O that I could persuade with you, to lay sadly to heart*

(a) Dr. Bryan's Dwelling with God, p. 313, 314.

the greatness of the sin of Divisions, and the grievousness of the punishment threatened against it; and that hath been executed for it; and that the Leaders and Encouragers of private Christians to make this sinful Separation, would read oft and meditate much upon St. Jude's Epistle to verse 20. And that the multitudes that are willing to be led by them, would follow the prescription of the Means here to preserve or recover themselves from this seduction, ver. 20, 21. And that both would leave off their reviling the Government Ecclesiastical, and the Ministers that conform, and peaceably and submissively behave themselves, by the example of Michael, who tho' an Archangel, and contending in a just Cause, and disputing in an Argument wherein he was very knowing, did not, durst not, bring a railing Accusation, tho' his Adversary was the Devil; but committed the Cause to God, saying, The Lord rebuke thee. Tho' Quakers, who pretend to follow no other Rule save the light within them, use ordinarily such railing and reviling Language; yet let no such word ever be heard to proceed out of your mouths, who profess to follow and walk exactly, according to the written Word of God.

Gentlemen, 'Tis possible, that some of your Party will be offended with Dr. Bryan, because, tho' he was silenced for his Non-Conformity, at the very time of his writing that Book, he has notwithstanding therein spoken very freely and sharply against his own Brethren for their Separation from the Established Church of England. But Mr. Baxter himself, who foresaw this Objection against his Friend Dr. Bryan, has returned a double Answer to it in these following words, which I hope will be duly consider'd.

To those (saies (a) Mr. Baxter) I shall only say,

(a) Baxter's Pref. to Dr. Bryan's Dwell. with God, p. 12, 13.

1. *Why do they not wonder as much at the Non-Conformists, Hilderham, Paget, Brightman, Bradshaw, Ball, with many more; who said much more against Separation long ago?*

2. *Consider that the Author is an ancient experienced Divine, who hath liv'd to see the fruits of all Extremes; and in particular, what the Love-killing and Separating Spirit hath done in these Kingdoms these thirty Years. He hath been the Tutor and Father of more faithful Teachers in the Church, than many other worthy Pastors have been of converted serious Christians. And if the young unexperienced Censurers will but stay, till they come to his Age and Experience, and to half his Learning, Wisdom and Grace, and till they have done God's Church but the twentieth part of the service that he hath done; it's like they will be themselves of the same mind that he is.*

But, Gentlemen, I shall now put an end to this Discourse, and beg your excuse for the length of my Letter, which is much greater than at first I intended.

I hope, I have expressed my self with so much plainness and perspicuity in all the parts of it, that you cannot readily mistake me: but if my meaning shall any where seem Obscure to you, Gentlemen, you are near enough to ask, and I shall be heartily willing to give you, an Explication of what I have written.

I expect, Gentlemen, that you will return a full and substantial Answer to these Papers, which I now send you; and that what shall be written by any one or more of you, shall receive the Approbation of you all. *I am,*

Gentlemen,

Your sincere Friend and Servant

THO. BENNET,



A N
A N S W E R
To a BOOK Intituled,
Thomas against Bennet:
O R, T H E
P R O T E S T A N T D I S S E N T E R S
Vindicated from the
Charge of SCHISM.

By *THO. BENNET*, M.A. Rector
of *St. James's* in *Colchester*, and Fellow
of *St. John's* College in *Cambridge*.

C A M B R I D G E:

Printed at the UNIVERSITY-PRESS, for
Edmund Jeffery, Bookseller in *Cambridge*, and
James Knapton, at the Crown in *St. Paul's*
Church-yard, *London*. 1704.

ANSWER

To a BOOK Intituled

Treasons against Bennett.

OR THE

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

Vindicated from the

Charge of



By JOHN BENNET, M.A. Rector

of St. James's in Colchester, and Fellow
of St. John's College in Cambridge.

CAMBRIDGE.

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An ANSWER to Thomas against
Bennet, in a Letter to the Author
of it.

SIR,

IN your Book intituled *Thomas against Bennet*, you endeavor to shew, that my *Confutation of Popery* is inconsistent with my *Abridgment of the London Cases*, and will vindicate the Dissenters from the Charge of *Schism*.

I have examined my Books, Sir, and what you have written against them; and because upon the whole I find, that your Charge is false and groundless, therefore you must give me leave to do Justice to my self, and to those Trifles, which I have made public, by sending this Letter to you.

I shall endeavor, Sir, to draw this necessary Vindication into as narrow a compass, as I am able; that the Controversy depending between your self and me, may be short and clear. In order to this, I shall use the following Method.

1. I shall lay down, and prove four Propositions, upon which my following Discourse will depend.
2. I shall reconcile the pretended Contradiction between the *Abridgment of the London Cases*, and the *Confutation of Popery*.
3. I shall answer your Objections against the second Chapter of the *Abridgment*; and prove, That the *Confutation of Popery* has not furnished the Dissenters

senters with any one Argument against it.

4. I shall prove, that the first Chapter of the third part of the *Confutation of Popery* will not vindicate the Dissenters from the Charge of *Schism*.

FIRST then, I shall lay down, and prove four Propositions, upon which my following Discourse will depend. The four Propositions are these.

1. It is unlawful for a Man to profess those *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are not contained in the Scripture.

2. Tho' it is unlawful for a Man to profess those *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are not contained in the Scripture; yet it will not follow from thence, that it is unlawful to perform those *Practices* in God's Worship, which are not particularly enjoined in the Scripture.

3. In my *Confutation of Popery* I did not justify our Separation from Rome upon this Principle, viz. Because she imposes such *Practices* in God's Worship, as are not particularly enjoined in the Scripture; but upon this Principle, viz. because she imposes the Profession of those *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are either absolutely false, or forbidden in Scripture, or not contained therein.

4. The Established Church do's not require Lay-Persons to profess any Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; but only requires them to perform such *Practices* in God's Worship, as may lawfully be performed.

First, It is unlawful for a Man to profess those *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are not contained in the Scripture.

For

For nothing can be an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation, unless God has revealed it. Now I have proved in the first part of my *Confutation of Popery*, that we are not to account any thing Divine Revelation, which is not contained in the Scriptures. And consequently, that which is not contained in the Scriptures is not an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation. Whosoever therefore do's profess that Doctrine, which is not contained in the Scripture, as an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation; do's thereby profess, that God has revealed what God has not revealed; and is thereby guilty of charging God falsely.

And farther, he makes this groundless Article of Faith, the Revelation of which he falsely charges upon God, the condition of the Salvation of all the World; because the terms of the Gospel-Covenant are the same to all Mankind. And consequently, he declares, that those who do not believe this groundless Doctrine, which they have no reason to believe, and which God has not commanded them to believe; I say, he declares, that all such Persons have no claim to the benefits of the Gospel-Covenant, but are in a state of Damnation.

Now 'tis certainly unlawful for a Man to charge God falsely, by pretending that God has revealed what he has not revealed. And it is also certainly unlawful to declare, that those Persons have no claim to the benefits of the Gospel-Covenant, but are in a state of Damnation; who have a claim to the benefits of the Gospel-Covenant, and are in a state of Salvation. And yet he that professes a Doctrine, as an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation, which Doctrine God has not revealed, because it is not contained in his written Word;

doth both these things. He belies Almighty God, and uncharitably damns his Christian Brethren; and therefore it is most evidently unlawful for a Man to profess such an Unscriptural Doctrine, as an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation.

'Tis true, had God given the Church an Infal-
lible Spirit, and commanded us to believe whatso-
ever Doctrine the Church teaches; then we had
been obliged to believe and profess every Doctrine
which the Church teaches, as an Article of Faith
necessary to Salvation, tho' it were not expressly
taught in the Scriptures. But I have shewn in the
first part of my *Confutation of Popery*, that the
Church is not infallible, and that we are not ob-
liged to believe and profess, whatsoever Doctrine
the Church teaches: and therefore we are not ob-
liged to believe and profess any Doctrine, as an
Article of Faith necessary to Salvation, unless it
be contained in the Scripture. And he that do's
otherwise, declares that God has revealed what he
has not revealed, and that God will condemn those
whom he will never condemn. And such a De-
claration or Profession is, I think, apparently un-
lawful.

Nor can it be pretended by the *Papists*, that tho'
some of their Doctrines are groundless, yet since
their Superiors do require them to make profession
of such Doctrines, as Articles of Faith necessary
to Salvation; therefore they are bound to make
such Profession in obedience to their Superiors.
Because I have already proved it unlawful to make
such a Profession; and consequently they must not
obey their Superiors in making it.

Besides, the command of Superiors cannot make
a Man believe a Doctrine. Superiors may com-
mand the Will of Man to act; but they cannot
com-

command his Understanding to assent and believe. And therefore, if a Man has no other grounds to believe a Doctrine, besides the command of his Superiors; 'tis impossible for him to believe it, let his Superiors command it as strictly as they please.

Belief is the effect of what a Man thinks sufficient evidence: but it cannot be an act of Obedience to *Human* Authority. We are indeed obliged to believe whatsoever God commands us to believe, because that God who do's command, is Truth it self, and cannot deceive us; and whatsoever he proposes to us as Truth, we have evident reason and grounds to believe and account Truth, merely because he proposes it. But the command of *Human* Authority, tho' it do's oblige the Will of Man to act, yet it do's not convey or imply any evidence to his Understanding. And therefore we cannot believe as our Superiors do command, unless we have some other evidence besides their command.

Now since a Man cannot believe in obedience to his Superiors; 'tis plain, that he cannot believe any Doctrine as an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation, which his Superiors bid him profess, unless he has some other proof of that Doctrine, besides his Superiors command. Wherefore, whosoever owns, that he has no other evidence or proof of those Doctrines, which he pretends to believe as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, besides the command of his Superiors; do's and must know, that he do's not and cannot believe them. And therefore, he that professes a Doctrine as an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation, *merely* in obedience to his Superiors, without any other evidence; professes to believe a Doctrine as an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation, which Do-

ctrine he do's not at all believe. And consequently, he is guilty of a most gross and palpable lie, which no command of a Superior can possibly excuse.

'Tis true, when our Superiors require us to do any thing, which is indifferent or lawful; we are then bound to obey them. But no command of a Superior is able to make that to become lawful, which is unlawful, or that to become not sinful, which is sinful. And consequently, all the Authority in the World cannot make it lawful for the *Papists* or any other Persons, to profess *Unscriptural Doctrines* as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; and by such a Profession to belie their own Consciences, and declare that God has revealed what he has not revealed, and that those shall Perish whom God intends to Save.

From what has been said, I think it appears very plainly, that it is unlawful to profess those *Doctrines* as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are not contained in the Scripture.

Secondly, Tho' it is unlawful to profess those *Doctrines* as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are not contained in the Scripture; yet it will not follow from thence, that it is unlawful to perform those *Practices* in God's Worship, which are not particularly enjoined in the Scripture.

For it appears from what I have already said, that such a Profession is unlawful, because it injures both God and our Neighbor; and oftentimes also it is a Profession of what a Man knows that he do's not and cannot believe; and consequently, we are forbidden by the Word of God to make such a Profession. But we are not forbidden by God's Word to perform those *Practices* in God's Worship,

Worship, which are not particularly enjoined in the Scripture; nor is it unlawful to perform such Practices in God's Worship upon any account whatsoever.

Nay, we are so far from being forbidden by God's Word to perform such Practices in his Worship, as are not particularly enjoined by him; that we are positively commanded to perform them in obedience to our Superiors; 1. For Conscience sake; because our Superiors are armed with God's Authority, and their lawful commands are the commands of God, and for that reason do oblige the Conscience to the observation of them. 2. For Peace sake; because we are commanded, *If it be possible, and as much as lies in us, to live peaceably with all Men*; Rom. 12. 18. And I am sure the Peace of the Church can never be preserved, unless Superiors be obeyed, when they injoin lawful Practices in God's Worship. We are therefore to ask our Consciences this question, *Is it possible for me to perform this practice in God's Worship, which is required of me; or no?* If it be; we are indispensably bound to perform it.

'Tis true, if the Practice required of us in God's Worship, be unlawful, that is, forbidden in God's Word; we are not then to perform it, either for Conscience, or for Peace sake. For Conscience towards God cannot be pleaded in excuse of an unlawful practice: nor must we buy Peace it self at the price of Sin. But if the Practice be lawful, as all Practices which our Superiors command in God's Worship are, unless they are forbidden in Scripture: I say, if the Practice be lawful, we are undoubtedly bound to perform it. Because we have a general and strict command from God himself to obey our Superiors in all lawful things.

I shall illustrate this matter, Sir, with a familiar Instance or two, which will make what I have said still more clear.

Kneeling at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is a *Practice* enjoined by the Established Church. Now 'tis lawful to Kneel at the Lord's Supper, because 'tis not forbidden by God; and therefore we ought to perform the *Practice* of Kneeling in obedience to the Churches command. But then, if our Church, instead of requiring the *Practice* only, had required the Profession of the *Doctrine* also; that is, if she had enjoined every one of her Members to profess and believe, as an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation, that all Christians whatsoever are bound to Kneel at the Lord's Supper; I say, if our Church had done this, I must confess, that tho' the *Practice* of Kneeling at the Lord's Supper may be very lawfully performed, yet the *Doctrine* of Kneeling, that is, of the Necessity of it, may not be lawfully professed. Because this *Doctrine* of Kneeling is groundless, and the profession of it would be the profession of what we do not and cannot believe, and it would also cause us to charge God with revealing and commanding what he has not revealed or commanded, and would also make us condemn great numbers of Christians without any cause. Such a Profession therefore of the *Doctrine* of Kneeling (or of any other gesture in the Reception of the Lord's Supper) is plainly forbidden by the Word of God. Whereas the Word of God has not forbidden the *Practice* of Kneeling, and therefore it is lawful to perform it in obedience to the Churches command.

Again, our Church requires us to join in the Use of the Established Liturgy; and this *Practice* is most apparently lawful, because 'tis not forbidden

bidden in the Word of God. But then, if our Church, instead of requiring the *Practice* only, had enjoined the *Doctrine* of the Liturgy also; that is, if she had required all her Members to profess and believe, as an Article of Faith necessary to Salvation, that God has commanded all Christians whatsoever to use our *English* Liturgy, and that those Christians who do not use it in foreign Countries, do sin in not using it; I say, if our Church had done this, I must confess, that tho' the *Practice* of joining in our Liturgy may be lawfully performed, yet the *Doctrine* of our Liturgy, that is, of the Necessity of it, may not be lawfully professed. Because such a *Doctrine* is groundless, &c. and consequently forbidden by God's Word; whereas the *Practice* is lawful, because not forbidden by God's Word.

Thus then you perceive the vast difference between the Profession of Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; and the Performance of such *Practices* in God's Worship, as are not particularly enjoined in Scripture. Those reasons, which make the Profession of such *Doctrines* unlawful, do not in the least affect the Performance of such *Practices*. For we do not pretend, that 'tis unlawful to profess and believe any *Doctrine*, which is not contained in the Scripture, *merely* because it is not contained therein; but we say, 'tis unlawful to profess any *Doctrines*, which are not contained in the Scripture, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; because *such* a Profession of them implies, and is attended with, such things, as makes them, not only not commanded, but *forbidden*. Whereas the performance of such *Practices* in God's Worship, as are not particularly enjoined in Scripture, is not liable to these objections; and farther, 'tis so

far from being not commanded, that (tho' the particular *Practices*, which are instances of our obedience, are not numbred up in the Scripture, yet) the performance of all lawful *Practices* in the Worship of God, in obedience to our Superiors, for Conscience and Peace sake, is most positively, plainly and strictly *commanded* in the general Precept of obedience to our Superiors in all lawful Matters.

From what has been said, I think it appears very plainly, that tho' it is unlawful to profess those *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are not contained in the Scripture; yet it will not follow from thence, that it is unlawful to perform those *Practices* in God's Worship, which are not particularly enjoined in the Scripture.

Thirdly, In my *Confutation of Popery* I did not justify our Separation from *Rome* upon this principle, *viz.* because she imposes such *Practices* in God's Worship, as are not particularly enjoined in the Scripture; but upon this principle, *viz.* because she imposes the profession of such *Doctrines* as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are either absolutely false, or forbidden in Scripture, or not contained therein.

Now this is a matter of fact, abundantly evident to any person that reads my Book. From the 2d to the 13th Chap. of the 2d part of it, I charge the Church of *Rome* with imposing such *Doctrines*, as are either absolutely false, or expressly forbidden in the Scripture. From the 14th to the 21st Chap. of the same part, I charge her with imposing such *Doctrines* as are not contained in the Scripture. In the 22d Chap. of the same part, I speak very briefly of their *Doctrines* of *Orders*, *Matrimony*,

mony, &c. And I blame her for imposing the Belief of all those *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation. But I have not so much as once hinted in any part of the Book, that I think the imposition of such a *Practice* in God's Worship, as is not particularly enjoined in Scripture, is a just objection against holding Communion with her.

Fourthly, The Established Church do's not require Lay-Persons to profess any Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; but only requires them to perform such *Practices* in God's Worship, as may lawfully be performed.

For tho' the Dissenting Ministers do object against some *Doctrines*, which the Clergy of the Established Church are obliged to profess; yet every body knows that the Layety are not obliged to profess those *Doctrines*. Nor are the Clergy themselves obliged to profess those *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation.

I confess, I do not think it difficult to prove all those *Doctrines*, which the Clergy are obliged to profess, from the Scriptures: but this is at present needless; since it appears from the *Abridgment*, that I did not then design to meddle with the Terms of Clergy-Communion, but with those of Lay-Communion only. My words (p. 28.) are these; 'Tis not my present business to prove, that the Pastors of Dissenting Congregations ought to subscribe to the Articles, &c. For tho' that Matter may be easily made out, yet 'tis foreign to my purpose; my design being only to satisfy Lay-Dissenters, and to shew that they may lawfully join with our Church, because then it will appear to be their duty to do so constantly. 'Tis sufficient therefore for my present purpose, that the Established Church do's not require Lay-Persons to profess any Unscriptural Da-

Erines, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; but only requires them to perform such *Practices* in God's Worship, as may lawfully be performed.

SECONDLY, I shall now reconcile the pretended Contradiction between the *Abridgment of the London Cases*, and the *Confutation of Popery*.

You say (*Tho. against Bennet*, p. 42.) that in the *Abridgment*, p. 309. I tell the Dissenters, that *Nothing but sinful terms of Communion can justify a Separation*; and therefore you must charge our Church with *sinful terms of Communion*, or else you cannot possibly defend your Practice. Now this Principle I do still assert and maintain in my *Confutation of Popery*, wherein you pretend that I contradict it.

In that book, Sir, I justify our Separation from Rome upon no other Principle but this. And in that very Chapter, which you do so particularly examin, I have expressly said, p. 344. that the cause of the Separation between us and the *Papists* is this, Because the Church of England will not comply with such things, as I have proved it unlawful to comply with. And then I entreat our *Papish* Adversaries, if they desire to prove that the Church of England is *Schismatical*, to give us an Instance, where we break Communion with any such Church, as is willing to maintain Communion with us upon lawful terms. From whence it appears, that if they can give us an Instance, where we break Communion with any such Church, as is willing to maintain Communion with us upon lawful terms; then I acknowledge the Church of England to be *Schismatical*. And consequently, I do thereby declare it to be my opinion, that *Nothing but sinful terms of Communion can justify a Separation*.

I shall now examin what you alledge to prove, that I have contradicted this Principle in my *Confutation of Popery*. You do not pretend, Sir, that I have expresly affirmed in any part of that Book, that *something else, besides sinful terms of Communion, will justify a Separation*; but you endeavor to make it appear from some passages of that Book, that I have said as much in effect. And,

First, you tell me (p. 32.) that in my *Confutation of Popery* I do all along justify a Separation as lawful, and not to be *Schism*, when it is only rejecting those things which are not *Fundamental* or *Essential*; yea, such things, which are forbidden in the Scriptures, or not contained therein.

But I pray, Sir, where do I say that a Separation is lawful, and no *Schism*, when it is only rejecting those things, which are not *Fundamental* or *Essential*? Where do I say, or intimate, or imply, that retaining of Fundamentals and Essentials will clear a Man from *Schism*; tho' he separates from a Church upon the account of such things as are neither *Fundamental* nor *Essential*.

You cannot but know, Sir, that in my Book there is nothing like this; and for that reason you did not quote any words of mine to prove it. Nay farther, you cannot but know, Sir, that I have declared the contrary; for those very words of mine, which you quote in the 25th Page of your Book, do prove that I have declared the contrary.

My words, which you quote, are these which follow; *He that professes and maintains the Fundamental Christian Doctrines and the Essentials of Christian Worship, but divides and separates from other Persons who profess and maintain the same things; is a Christian, I confess, or a part of Christ's Mystical*

Mystical Body; but he is a divided part, &c. (Confutation of Popery, p. 340, 341.) You see, Sir, that I am so far from making that Separation, which is only rejecting those things which are not Fundamental or Essential, to be a lawful Separation, and no *Schism*; that I expressly call him a divided Member (that is, a Schismatic) who separates from other Christians, tho' in his Separation he do's actually retain all the Fundamentals and Essentials of Christianity.

Besides, you cannot but know, Sir, that in the *Confutation of Popery*, the Professing and Maintaining of Fundamentals and Essentials, is alwaies given as the Character, not of him that is no Schismatic, but of him that is a professed Christian, tho' he be a Schismatical one. And consequently, 'twas impossible for you to imagin, that I account him no Schismatic, who professes and maintains all the Fundamentals and Essentials of Christianity; unless you think me Fool enough to believe, that a professed Christian cannot be a Schismatic; tho' at the same time I was proving, that a great Body of professed Christians are actually Schismatics.

But farther, I am so far from justifying a Separation as lawful, and to be no *Schism*, when it is only rejecting those things, which are not Fundamental or Essential; that in my justification of the Church of *England* from the Charge of *Schism*, I do not so much as once mention the words *Fundamental* and *Essential*, or any thing like them.

'Tis true, in the former part of that Chapter, wherein I justify the Church of *England* from the Charge of *Schism*, I thought it necessary to premise some few things concerning the Nature of the Catholic Church, &c. and then I speak of Fundamentals

dammentals and Essentials, the profession and maintenance of which do make a Man a Christian, as I have already said. And afterwards I prove, that the Church of *England* is a part of the Catholic Church; because she professes and maintains the Fundamentals and Essentials of Christianity. But these things, Sir, are no part of my Justification of the Church of *England* from the Charge of *Schism*. They are only premis'd for the better understanding of the Nature of the Catholic Church, and of that *Schism* from it, with which the Church of *England* stands charged by the Papists.

But my Justification of the Church of *England* from the Charge of *Schism* begins at the 343^d Page, at these words; *Now since the Church of England is a part of the Catholic Church, the next question is, Whether she be a divided part, or no, &c.* Let me beg you, Sir, to begin at these words, and read to the end of that Chapter. For I am sure, you'll not find the words *Fundamental* and *Essential*, or any like them, so much as once mention'd there. And how then was it possible for you to say, that *I all along justify a Separation as lawful, and not to be Schism, when it is only rejecting those things, which are not Fundamental or Essential, &c.*

But you'll tell me perhaps, that I all along justify a Separation as lawful, and not to be *Schism*, when it is only rejecting those things, which are forbidden in the Scriptures, or not contained therein. And since those things which are forbidden in the Scriptures, or not contained therein, are not Fundamental or Essential; therefore I all along justify a Separation as lawful, and not to be *Schism*, when it is only rejecting those things which are not Fundamental or Essential. To this I answer,

1. Those things which are forbidden in the Scri-
ptures,

ptures, cannot be comply'd with without sin. And therefore 'tis not only lawful, but necessary to separate from those, who impose such forbidden terms of Communion. Now 'tis true, that these forbidden things are neither Fundamental nor Essential; but then, the reason why these forbidden things will justify a Separation, is not, because they are neither Fundamental nor Essential; but because they are *forbidden*. For if they were not forbidden, their being neither Fundamental nor Essential, would not justify a Separation.

2. Those things not contained in the Scriptures, upon the account of which I justify a Separation from the Church of *Rome*, are such *Doctrines*, as tho' they be not contained in the Scriptures, are nevertheless impos'd, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation. Now the profession of such Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, is (as I have largely prov'd) most certainly unlawful: and therefore the imposition of such Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, will justify a Separation. But the reason, why these *Doctrines* do justify a Separation, is not, because they are neither Fundamentals nor Essentials, but because the profession of them, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, is most certainly *unlawful*.

You see then, that I do not justify a Separation as lawful, and not to be *Schism*, when it is only rejecting those things, which are not Fundamental or Essential; but I justify a Separation as lawful, and to be no *Schism*, when the terms of Communion are sinful; as compliance with things forbidden in the Scriptures, and the profession of Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, most certainly are. For if the terms of
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Communion are lawful, I never said or thought, that it was no *Schism* to separate, tho' the things rejected were neither Fundamental nor Essential.

Well then, since it appears, that in my *Confutation of Popery* I do not justify a Separation as lawful, and not to be *Schism*, when it is only rejecting those things which are not Fundamental or Essential; the next thing to be consider'd is, whether in my *Confutation of Popery* I do all along justify a Separation to be lawful, and not to be *Schism*, when it is only rejecting those things, which are forbidden in the Scriptures, or not contained therein.

Now 'tis true, and I have already acknowledged, that I do therein justify a Separation as lawful, and not to be *Schism*, when it is only rejecting such *Doctrines*, as are impos'd as *Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation*; tho' those *Doctrines* be either forbidden in the Scriptures, or not contained therein. And upon this Principle I justify our Separation from the the Church of *Rome*; because she requires us to profess and believe such forbidden or groundless *Doctrines*, as *Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation*.

But will it follow from hence, that in my opinion something else, besides sinful terms of Communion, will justify a Separation? No, Sir; for 'tis granted on all hands, that the profession of forbidden *Doctrines* as *Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation*, is unlawful. And I have largely prov'd, that the profession of those *Doctrines* as *Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation*, which *Doctrines* are not contained in the Scriptures, is unlawful also. And consequently, the profession of such forbidden or groundless *Doctrines*, as *Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation*, is a sinful term of Communion. And I give this as the reason, why our Churches separating from *Rome* upon the account of her forbidden
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or groundless Doctrines, is a Lawful Separation; and no *Schism*; viz. because *she is forced so far to Separate from her for fear of offending God*; Confut. Pop. p. 343. And I am sure, God will never be offended with us, for joining with *Rome* in the profession of her forbidden or groundless Articles of Faith; unless the profession of such forbidden or groundless Articles of Faith be a sinful term of Communion.

Wherefore, since the profession of such forbidden or groundless Doctrines as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, is in my opinion a sinful term of Communion; certainly no Man will say, that in my opinion the profession of such forbidden or groundless Doctrines is one of those things, which tho' no sinful term of Communion, will justify a Separation notwithstanding.

Secondly, You tell me, (p. 32.) that *when I come to prove, that the Church of England doth not drive any persons from joining with her, I give this as the reason, Because she do's not impose such things as are unlawful, or otherwise keep them from the Church.* And within four lines after you insinuate, that by the word *otherwise*, which you have printed in a different Character, I mean imposing *groundless Doctrines or Practices*; and consequently, that I acknowledge some other way of driving Men from the Church besides sinful terms of Communion, viz. by the imposition of groundless Doctrines or Practices.

But you very well know, Sir, that the profession of groundless (that is, unscriptural) *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, is by me accounted a sinful term of Communion; and therefore it was contained in the former part of my reason, which speaks of our Churches not imposing

posing such things as are unlawful. And as for such *Practices*, as are enjoined by Lawful Authority (tho', because they are not expressly mentioned in Scripture, you call them *groundless*) I have proved, that the imposition of such *Practices* is not once mentioned in my Book, as a cause of *Schism*, by driving Men from Church-Communion.

'Tis plain then, that by the word *otherwise* I mean *by outward force and violence*. This you might have learnt, Sir, from my Book, pag. 341: where I mention two ways, by which a Man is said not to suffer others to join in Communion with him, *viz. imposing unlawful terms of joining with him, or hindring them from being present at the performance of Religious Duties*. And these two methods of driving Men from joining with her, are those which I say, pag. 343. the Church of England does not Practise.

But, say you, when I had to do with the Dissenters, I said, *they must charge our Church with sinful terms of Communion, or else they could not possibly defend their Practice*. I did not mention or suppose it possible (as you pretend I now do) that a body of Men might otherwise (than by sinful terms of Communion) *Sinfully and Schismatically* keep any from the Church. True, Sir; for I was then arguing with such persons, as never objected, that the Church doors were shut against them, or that they were tied by the legs during the time of Divine Service, or (in short) that they were hindred by any sort of outward force and violence, from being present at the performance of Religious Duties. And therefore I had good reason to say, that they could not possibly defend their Practice, unless they were kept from the Church by sinful terms of Communion. And yet

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notwithstanding, I then might, and did, suppose it possible for Men in other circumstances, to be sinfully and Schismatically kept from the Church *otherwise* than by sinful terms of Communion, *viz.* by outward force and violence.

And thus, Sir, I have shewn you, that in my *Confutation of Popery* I have not said, either expressly, or in effect, that something else besides sinful terms of Communion will justify a Separation; when no outward force or violence is used; which is always supposed in our disputes with the Dissenters. And consequently, in my *Confutation of Popery* I have not in any wise contradicted this principle, *viz.* *Nothing but sinful terms of Communion will justify a Separation.*

THIRDLY, I shall answer your Objections against the Second Chapter of the *Abridgment*; and prove, that the *Confut. of Popery* has not furnished the Dissenters with any one argument against it.

First, I shall answer your Objections against the Second Chapter of the *Abridgment*. In that Chapter I prove, that *The use of indifferent things is no objection against our Communion*. In order to this I shew, 1. *What is meant by Indifferent Things.* 2. *That Indifferent Things may be used in Divine Worship.*

But, say you, p. 34. *they may as well be let alone.* And I say, *They may as well be used, as let alone.* But what is all this to the purpose? The question is not, whether Indifferent Things may be let alone, or no: but whether Indifferent things, when imposed, may be used in Divine Worship, or no. For if they may Lawfully be used in Divine Worship, when imposed by the Church; as I have proved they may by several arguments, to which you have not returned

turned one syllable of Answer; I say, if they may be Lawfully used, when imposed; certainly 'tis not your business or mine, to seek any farther. Because 'tis our Governors place to determine, whether they shall be imposed, or no.

But, say you, *The observation of God's Institutions alone in such a manner, as he has appointed them, is sufficient to employ our care and time.* But I wish you could shew me, Sir, what is the Manner, which God has appointed for the observation of his Institutions. For instance; Public Prayer and the Lord's Supper are God's Institutions; and therefore tell me, where God has appointed the Manner of these things. Where are we Commanded to pray publicly, either *Extempore*, or by a Form? Where are we Commanded to receive the Lord's Supper Kneeling, or Standing, or Sitting? And yet we cannot pray at all in public, unless we pray either *Extempore*, or by a Form. Nor can we receive the Lord's Supper, unless we Kneel, or Sit, or use some other gesture. Wherefore, since God's Institutions must be performed in some manner or other, and since you must grant, that God has not determined the Manner of these things; certainly our Governors may, and must determine the Manner of them for Decency, and Edification, and Orders sake.

But then you add, *Some of the Dissenters think Indifferent Things sinful.* I am not bound, Sir, to answer for the Mistakes of some Dissenters: nor will their hard opinion of Indifferent Things alter the nature of them. But give me leave, Sir, to ask you a question, or two. In this very page you make the Dissenters say, *If God has not made them (that is, Indifferent Things) Sin or Duty, and (if they be) in this sense Indifferent; such they will remain;*

because no Human Power or Authority can change the nature of things. And why then do you make the Dissenters say in the very same page, that *indifferent things are sinful*? What? Can the same Man think the same thing to be *indifferent* and *sinful* at the same time? or can a Man believe, that *indifferent things are unlawful*, even tho' he believes and confesses, that *No Human Power or Authority can change the Nature of them*? For say you, *some of the Dissenters think they are sinful*; and most or all of them say, the *Consent to them or Practice of them, as they are injoin'd with all their Circumstances, is unlawful*.

In the 3^d place, I shew in that Chapter, how we may know what things are *indifferent in the Worship of God*. And you tell me, p. 36. that I give this following Direction *such things are not indifferent, as are so notoriously agreeable or opposite to Decency, Edification and Order, that common Reason will be able to judge of them*. How, Sir? Have I told the World, that such things are *not indifferent, as are so notoriously agreeable to Decency, &c.* that common Reason will be able to judge of them? Look again, I beseech you, and be sure before you write: for such marks of haste are not easily excusable.

My words, Sir, are these, *Some things are so notoriously agreeable or opposite to Decency, Edification and Order, that common Reason will be able to judge of them*. If common Reason declares, that they are *agreeable to Decency, &c.* then they are *indifferent*: but if common Reason declares, that they are *opposite to Decency, &c.* then they are *not indifferent*.

Here you take occasion to object against *Responses, alternate reading of the Psalms, &c.* but does
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common Reason declare, that these things are *opposite* to Decency, &c. In preaching indeed, the tumultuous speaking of many together to the same Auditory, is less to Edification, than the orderly speaking of one by one: but in Prayer and Praise 'tis very *agreeable* to Decency, &c. for the whole Church to join together in an audible manner. And why is it not as *agreeable* to Decency, &c. for the Congregation audibly to join altogether in some Petitions, and in alternate reading of the Psalms; as in the singing of Psalms, which the Dissenters themselves do practise?

But say you. p. 36. *The Dissenters may possibly reply, that the Cathedral Worship especially is for the most part as unintelligible to the far greatest part of the Assembly, and as unedifying for that reason, as the Latin Service.* I hope, Sir, you do not account our Liturgy, as 'tis used in Parochial Churches, unintelligible; tho' you use the word *especially*, saying, *the Cathedral Worship especially.*

But, Sir, cannot a Man join in our Liturgy, unless he go to the Cathedrals? Or must the Liturgy be blamed, because some persons do not understand *English*; when 'tis sung? Those for whom the Cathedral Worship is design'd, do understand it: and those who do not, may keep away, and repair to their Parochial Churches. But whatever you may think on't, this Cathedral worship is not so difficult, but that any ordinary person may in one weeks time be able to join in every part of it.

But tho' some things are so notoriously agreeable or opposite to Decency, &c. that common Reason may judge of them; yet I have own'd in the *Abridgment*, that other things are not so evi-

dent. And therefore I have given three Rules in that case; the last of which is this, *That if the case be not apparent, and we cannot easily find out, how the things injoin'd are Decent, &c. we are obliged to be cautious how we condemn an Action, which those Men practise, whom for other things we cannot condemn. When we find that they argue, and produce Experience and Reason for it, and we have a whole Church against our Opinion, we should be apt to think the fault may be in our selves; and that 'tis for want of Understanding and Insight, for want of Use and Tryal, and by reason of some Prejudices, that we thus differ in our judgment from them. We see what little things determin Men ordinarily in these Matters, how addicted they are to their own Ways and Customs; and therefore we should think again. So may we be reconciled to the Rites of a Church, as we are to the Customs and Habits of Nation, which at first seem as Indecent, as the Ceremonies of a Church can do. In short, we have reason to suspect, 'tis a Zeal without knowledge, when we presume to set our Judgment, Reason and Experience, against the Judgment, Reason and Experience of the World.*

This you call the last and best Rule, p. 38. and you tell me, that a Dissenter will say, it amounts to this. *That if we do not believe, as the Church believes, because the Church believes it; yet we must do, as the Church doth, because the Church doth it: and not see with our own Eyes, and judge with our own Understandings. That we ought not to exercise the Discretive Faculty which God hath given us, or judge for our selves what is Sin, and what is Duty. Tho' 'tis certain, every Man must give an account of himself to God in the other World; yet*

Men must not examin or determin for themselves, what is pleasing or displeasing to God in this.

But, Sir, you did not, and durst not produce my own words; for in the bare Transcribing of them your Conscience would have recoiled, and made it impossible for you, one would think, to print so gross a Slander. You know, Sir, that I was speaking of *indifferent* things, the reason of whose Decency we do not *plainly* see, and consequently cannot make a *clear, just and true Judgment* of; and advising Men in such cases as are *not apparent*, to be modest and humble, and not to condemn an Action rashly, which Action those Men do practise, whom for other things we cannot condemn; giving you diverse Reasons, why in such Matters we ought not to set our own private Humor and Judgment against the Determination of the Church. And from hence, Sir, you gather, that in my opinion we ought not to see with our own Eyes, and judge with our own Understandings, what is *Sin*, and what is *Duty*; and that we ought not to examin or determin for our selves what is *pleasing* or *displeasing* to God.

Sir, I am sorry for your sake to see my self so much abus'd in this and the next Paragraph of your Book. And I hope, that when you have once more consider'd my words, and compar'd them with your own; you'll be sensible of your manifest Perversion of what I have said.

And thus have I answer'd all that is material, or in any wise worth my notice, in what you your self are pleas'd to object against the 2^d Chapter of the *Abridgment*. Now therefore I shall prove, that the *Confutation of Popery* has not furnish'd the Dissenters with any one Argument against it.

1. You say, p. 40. that I teach the Dissenters

to distinguish between the *Lawful* use of Indifferent things, and the *Superstitious* use of them. Let this be granted, Sir, and what will follow? Will any Man conclude, that indifferent things may not be *lawfully* us'd in Divine Worship, because they may by some persons be *Superstitiously* us'd therein?

You add, that some of the Established Church do use indifferent things *Superstitiously*: but give me leave to tell you, that your Instances do not prove it. However, suppose it true, that some of the Establish'd Church do use indifferent things *Superstitiously*; will it follow, that because some do use them *Superstitiously*, therefore none can use them *Lawfully*? I desire you, Sir to prove if you can, that that use of indifferent things, which the Establish'd Church enjoins, is a *Superstitious* use of them. But you did not offer at the proof of this, because you knew 'twas impossible to make it out.

2. You say, p. 41. that I teach the Dissenters to distinguish between the *use* of indifferent things, and the *imposition* of them. Let this be granted, Sir, since there is so much reason for this distinction. The imposition of indifferent things is a Command; and the use of indifferent things is an act of Obedience to that Command. And I think, we ought to distinguish between the Command, and that Obedience which is paid to it. But I never asserted, that either the use, or the imposition of indifferent things in God's Worship, is unlawful; and therefore my Proposition laid down in the *Abridgment* remains true and firm notwithstanding my distinction.

But you tell me, that *I speak of the imposition of indifferent things, as one justifiable Cause of our Separation from Rome.* I wonder, Sir, that you did not add, that I deny'd the *Trinity*; for I am sure,
you

you might have said the one with as much truth as the other. For I pray, Sir, where do I say, that the imposition of indifferent things is one justifiable Cause of our Separation from *Rome*? In my *Confutation of Popery* I prov'd it unlawful to join with the Church of *Rome*, because we cannot join with her, unless we profess diverse false, forbidden and groundless Doctrines, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation. Now you cannot think, that the profession of false or forbidden Doctrines is by me accounted an indifferent thing; and consequently you must believe, that the profession of *groundless* Doctrines, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, is in my opinion an indifferent thing, the imposition of which I speak of, as one justifiable Cause of our Separation from *Rome*.

But you might have understood, Sir, from my Book, p. 336. that I then thought the profession of *groundless* Doctrines, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, to be *unlawful*. My words are these, *Is it not a grievous sin for a Man to declare that none can be sav'd, but such as believe what God has not reveal'd? &c.* And consequently, I then declar'd, that such a profession of such Doctrines is by no means an indifferent thing in my judgment. But for your farther satisfaction, I have prov'd in the beginning of this Letter, that such a profession is unlawful: tho' one would have thought, that no Protestant could doubt of it; and for my part I took it for granted, that the Papists themselves would acknowledge it, upon supposition that they were first convinc'd, that the Scriptures are the Rule of Faith, which I think is fairly prov'd in the first part of the *Confutation of Popery*,

Wherefore, since the profession of groundless Doctrines, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, was then so plainly declared by me to be unlawful; I wonder how you could say or imagin, that my Justification of our Separation from *Rome* upon the account of her imposing such a profession as is by me thought unlawful, is a Justification of our Separation from her upon the account of her imposing indifferent things.

But here (*p. 42.*) you are pleased to add another Argument of your own. You tell me, that the Apostles and Elders, and Brethren impos'd no greater burden, than *necessary* things, *Acts 15, 28.* And why then should indifferent and unnecessary things be laid as a burden now? But consider, Sir, that the question is not, why they should be impos'd, for that none but Governors ought to determine; but the question is, whether they may be lawfully us'd, when impos'd.

But be pleas'd to inform me, Sir, in what sense those things were *necessary*, which the Apostles, &c. impos'd. 'Tis plain, that they were not necessary to *Salvation*; for abstinence from Bloud was one of those things, and yet I am perswaded you will not say, that abstinence from Bloud is necessary to *Salvation*. They were therefore necessary Orders for that Juncture: but all of them were not alwaies necessary. 'Tis plain therefore, that the Apostles, &c. injoin'd *indifferent* things, and called them *necessary* too, that is, necessary to be practis'd, because impos'd. And consequently this Text is a clear precedent for the imposition of Indifferent things.

But, say you, the Dissenters *dare not consent to, and approve of, what they think an Usurpation upon the Royal Dignity and Office of our blessed Savior.*

And

And do the Dissenters then believe, that the imposition of indifferent things, is an Usurpation upon the Royal Dignity and Office of Christ? If so; I should fain know, how the Dissenters do justify their own practice. For 'tis notorious, that they themselves have both impos'd indifferent things, and also consented to, and approved of, the use of them. But I need not enlarge upon this point. For I find that some Dissenters do not alwaies speak truth; and therefore I am not bound to believe him, who saies, the Dissenters do think the imposition of indifferent things an Usurpation upon the Royal Dignity and Office of Christ. Besides, concerning this point you may be pleas'd to read what I have written in the 17th Chapter of my *Discourse of Schism*, p. 60, 61.

3. You say, that *I speak of declaring these* (indifferent) *things necessary to Salvation, as a thing I would not be guilty of for all the Treasures of the Roman Church.* Be pleas'd to remember, Sir, that I was speaking of the Worship of Images and Relics, which Practice, with many others the Papists are obliged to think necessary to the Salvation of all Mankind. This being premis'd, Sir, I say the same thing still. Upon supposition that the Worship of Images and Relics is indifferent (which by the way I do not grant) I would not declare that the Worship of Images and Relics is necessary to the Salvation of all Mankind, for all the Treasures of the *Roman Church.* And my reason is plain, *viz.* because I do not find the Worship of Images and Relics either taught or practis'd in the Scriptures: and I have prov'd in the first part of my *Confutation of Popery*,

Popery, that all things necessary to Salvation are contained in the Scriptures.

But, say you, *This will teach the Dissenters to say, They are equally guilty of as great a crime, who make those things necessary to Communion; because if they do not hold Communion even in these things, we say, they are guilty of Schism, a sin as bad, as damnable, as Adultery or Murder.* No, Sir; for I have in the beginning of this Letter shewn you the vast difference between imposing those *Practices* as terms of Communion, which *Practices* are not particularly injoin'd in the Scriptures; and imposing the profession of Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation. The profession of Unscriptural *Doctrines*, whereby we declare that what God has not commanded is necessary to Salvation, is unlawful; but the performance of those *Practices* which are not particularly injoin'd in the Scriptures, is lawful. And consequently, those who impose such a profession of such *Doctrines*, and those who impose the performance of such *Practices*, as terms of Communion, are not equally guilty.

Nay, those who impose such *Practices*, as terms of Lay-Communion, are not guilty at all. Because their command may be lawfully obey'd; whereas the others command cannot be lawfully obey'd. And consequently, those who refuse to perform such *Practices* in obedience to their Superiors, are most certainly guilty of *Schism*: tho' those who refuse to make profession of such *Doctrines*, are not to be charged with *Schism* upon that account.

4. You tell me, that *I mention this as one justifiable Cause of our Separation from the Church of Rome, that they impose such things as terms of Com-*

Communion or Salvation, which are not Fundamentals or Essentials, or that are not contained in the Scriptures. But let me beg you, Sir, to talk no more of Fundamentals and Essentials, which are wholly foreign to the present purpose; and withal to remember, that when I charge the Church of *Rome* with things not contained in the Scriptures, as one justifiable Cause of our Separation from her, I do alwaies speak of *Doctrines*, impos'd as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; as I have prov'd in the beginning of this Letter. This being premis'd, Sir, I pray with what face can the Dissenters say (as you pretend they will, p. 43.) that *if this reason will justify our Separation, 'twill also justify theirs?*

For have I not prov'd, Sir, in the beginning of this Letter, that the Established Church does not require Lay-persons (whose case alone we are now to consider) I say, that she does not require Lay-persons to profess any Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; but only requires them to perform such *Practices* in God's Worship, as may lawfully be performed? Let the Dissenters shew, if they can, that Lay-persons are obliged by our Church, as they are by the Church of *Rome*, to profess Unscriptural *Doctrines*, as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation; or that it is as lawful to profess Unscriptural *Doctrines* as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, as it is to perform those *Practices* in God's Worship, which are not particularly enjoined in the Scriptures. But if neither of these things be done (as I have prov'd, it cannot) the Dissenters must confess, that the Principle upon which I justify our Separation from *Rome*, will not justify their Separation from us.

In

In a word, we justify our Separation from *Rome* upon no other principle but this, *viz.* because she imposes sinful terms of Lay-Communion; and when the Dissenters can prove, that the Established Church does impose any one unlawful term of Lay-Communion with her; then I my self will undertake to justify the Dissenters Separation from her.

And now, Sir, I hope, I have satisfy'd you, that the *Confutation of Popery* has not furnished the Dissenters with any one Argument against the 2^d Chapter of the *Abridgment*.

FOURTHLY, I shall now prove in the last place, that the 1st Chapter of the 3^d Part of the *Confutation of Popery*, will not vindicate the Dissenters from the Charge of *Schism*. You do not pretend, that I have said in any part of this Chapter, that the Dissenters are not Schismatics: but you think the Method I have taken to vindicate the Established Church of *England* from the Charge of *Schism*, will vindicate the Dissenters also.

Now I have justify'd the Established Church of *England* upon this Principle, *viz.* because the Church of *Rome* imposes sinful terms of Communion. And will this then do the Dissenters any service? Will this justify their Separation from the Established Church? No, Sir; for it cannot be prov'd, that the Established Church imposes one sinful term of Lay-Communion with her.

But you think, it seems, that my characters of a Schismatic will not sute the Dissenters; and this you endeavor to make appear by examining those Characters, and shewing that none of them do belong to the Dissenters. Suppose this true, Sir, yet the Dissenters may be Schismatics notwithstanding.

For

For I did not then pretend to mention all the Characters of a Schismatic, or to name all the possible instances of *Schism*. I said what I thought was sufficient in a Controversy with the Papists; but not all that might be said with respect to other Adversaries. However, that I may be brief, I shall prove, Sir, that one of those very Characters, which are mention'd in that Chapter, does belong to the Dissenters; and this I shall do in the following manner.

Page 341. I say, that *he who frequents a separate Congregation in opposition to his own, is a Schismatic*. This the Dissenters do, as I have prov'd in my *Discourse of Schism*. And consequently, this very Chapter of the *Confutation of Popery*, is so far from vindicating the Dissenters from the Charge of *Schism*, that it does plainly condemn them for Schismatics.

You tell me indeed, p. 29. that *there is no opposition, nay no difference as to Fundamentals and Essentials, between the one and the other*. True, Sir; for were there any opposition or difference between them as to the Fundamentals or Essentials, the one Party is, and must be, not Schismatical, but *Heretical*, and no Christians. But I have shewn in my *Discourse of Schism*, that there is an opposition between them notwithstanding, and that the one Party or the other must needs be guilty of a grievous breach of Church-Peace and Love. And where-soever this is found, there is a manifest *Schism*, notwithstanding any agreement in Fundamentals and Essentials. I have also prov'd that this *Schism* is to be charged on the Dissenters side, and consequently the Dissenters are Schismatics.

I shall not meddle with what you have written to prove, that the other Characters of a Schismatic

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tic mention'd in this Chapter, do not belong to the Dissenters. I never said or thought, that every Schismatic must have every Character of a Schismatic. If one True and Manifest Character belongs to him, it is sufficient to discover and convict him.

Nor shall I waste my time in a particular examination of the rest of your Book. You have said so much to little or no purpose, that were I oblig'd to wander after you, and shew you the weakness and impertinence of every part of your Letter; I should scarce ever make an end. I think, I have written enough to vindicate my self from the Charge of Self-contradiction, and from having written any thing which the Dissenters can make the smallest advantage of. That which has any shew of Argument in the remainder of your Book, is abundantly answer'd in the *Abridgment* and the *Discourse of Schism*; and therefore I might for the present very justly excuse my self from all farther trouble. However, I shall add a few Remarks upon some certain passages of yours, before I conclude this Letter.

As for that rude Reflection, which you make upon me in your 1st page, I shall only tell you, that had you known me better, certainly you would have spar'd it.

Page 4. You tell me, that in my opinion *The Dissenters are as bad as Adulterers or Murderers*. How you came to the knowledge of my Thoughts, I cannot tell: but I am sure, I know no part of the *Abridgment*, that has declared as much. I did not therein pretend to compare sins, and tell the World which is greater or less. A sin, whether it be great or small, is certainly damnable: and one kind of sin will damn as soon as another, tho'

tho' not to the same degree of Damnation: And therefore I might justly say in the *Abridgment*, that *Schism* will damn a Man as soon as Adultery or Murder, without so much as thinking, that *Schism* will damn to the same degree, as Adultery or Murder will. However, if I had said, what you pretend is my opinion, it would not have been worse than what I have quoted out of your own Mr. Mead in the *Discourse of Schism*, Chap. 7.

Page 7. You tell me, that the Dissenters will be apt to ask me, *Whether the Scriptures are the only and sufficient Rule of Faith, and of Worship and Ecclesiastical Discipline also.* You suppose, I will answer in the affirmative, because I have a Chapter to prove, That the Scriptures do contain all things necessary to Salvation. And if I answer thus, you say, *I oppose the Papists indeed, and not else.* For you tell me that the Papists will say, as much as I do, that *the Scriptures are our Rule of Faith.* Well, Sir, and cannot a Man oppose the Papists indeed, unless he say, that the Scriptures are the only and sufficient Rule, not only of Faith, but of Worship and Discipline also? What? will the Papists grant, that the Scriptures are the *only and sufficient* Rule of Faith? No, Sir; you know they will not grant it. And therefore there is a notorious and manifest opposition between the Papists and me, whether I say, that the Scriptures are the only and sufficient Rule of Worship and Discipline, or no.

However, that I may not displease your Friends the Dissenters, I shall grant, that the Scriptures are the only and sufficient Rule of Worship and Discipline, as well as of Faith. And what then? They are the only and sufficient Rule of Worship and Discipline as to all things generally and universally neces-

sary in them both. And 'tis absurd to talk of the Scriptures being the only and sufficient Rule of Worship and Discipline in any other sense. Because you your self do know, that the Scriptures have not prescibed the Circumstantials of Worship or Discipline either. And yet neither Worship nor Discipline can be perform'd, without the determination of Circumstantials, which are not generally and universally necessary, but Matters of a prudential Nature, which the Governors of the Church may and must determin.

But say you, *If we of the Church of England will not allow the Papists to plead Antiquity and Authority, and argue from unwritten Traditions and Canons, Councils and Fathers, &c. against us; but will be try'd by the Scriptures only: then the Dissenters will desire us to grant them the very same liberty, &c.* But you know, Sir, that we never blam'd the Papists for pleading Antiquity, &c. in favor of Circumstantials of an indifferent Nature, or of prudential Rules of Worship or Discipline: but for their pleading those things in favor of *Doctrines* impos'd as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation, which *Doctrines* are not contain'd in the Scriptures. And consequently, we may justly blame the Dissenters for making a rent in the Church upon the accout of such *Practices*, as are not expressly injoin'd in the Scriptures; tho' we will not allow the Papists to plead Antiquity for those Unscriptural *Doctrines*, which they impose as Articles of Faith necessary to Salvation. These things being premis'd, any person of ordinary Understanding will observe, that those words of mine, which you quote, p. 8. are nothing at all to your purpose.

Page 12. Because I had said, *Confutation of Popery* p. 339. that I would examin the Popish Objections
against

against our Communion, to the end, that those (Papists) who are willing, may receive satisfaction, and find rest unto their Souls in the profession and practice of the Religion by Law Established among us; you tell me, that in these words I seem to intimate, that because our Religion is by Law Established, therefore it must be professed and practised. Whereas (as you there proceed) If I use this as an Argument, 'twill hold for the Religion Established in any Country,---and according to this Argument the Law of the Land constitutes a *jus Divinum*, or Divine right. But what? may not I answer Objections made against our Established Religion, unless I suppose, that every Established Religion must be professed and practised by Divine right? Do you believe, Sir, that I would argue for the Religion by Law Established in any Country? Would I plead for the profession and practice of the *Heathenish* or *Turkish* Religion, because in some Countries they are by Law Established? No, Sir; the reason why I plead for the Religion by Law Established among us, is not because it is by Law Established, but because 'tis what we are bound by God himself to profess and practise. Did I think that the Law of the Land could give a Religion a *Divine right*; I would have proved no more against the Papists, but that our Religion is by Law Established, and told them that they ought to seek no farther. Whereas I do there endeavor to satisfy their Consciences concerning the Lawfulness of our Religion by Law Established; and consequently I do suppose it possible for an Established Religion to be such, as may not, and must not be professed and practised.

Page 13. You tell me, that you dare not condemn all the Schismatical *Corinthians* to the bottomless Pit. And what is this to me? Did I ever so condemn

them? I condemn no particular Schismatics; tho' I affirm that *Schism* is a damnable sin notwithstanding. I dare not condemn particular Drunkards; and yet I affirm that Drunkenness is a damnable sin. I leave the judgment of particular persons to God, who best knows what allowances to make for ignorance, Prejudice, Education, &c. tho' God has authoriz'd me to preach against, and condemn the sins, which those particular persons do commit.

You add, that *this is such preaching Hell and Damnation, as is not used by the Dissenters.* I am heartily sorry for it: for I alwaies hop'd that the Dissenters did preach Hell and Damnation against Damnable Sins, tho' not against particular persons.

Page 15. You tell me, that the Dissenters say, that *the Visible Church of Christ is divided into such as make a bare, and no more than Hypocritical Profession, and into such as are really what they pretend to be, together with their Infant Seed.* Right, Sir, and consequently, since every part of Christ's Visible Church is a Member of Christ's Visible Church, and since every Hypocritical Member shall eternally perish, or be utterly lost; 'tis plain that in the opinion of the Dissenters some Members of Christ's Visible Church shall eternally perish, or be utterly lost. And yet within a few Pages after (*viz. p. 26.*) tho' 'tis evident that I spoke of the Members of Christ's Visible Church only, you have discover'd a palpable absurdity following from my words, which palpable absurdity is this, *That a Man may be a Member of Christ, and yet eternally perish, or be utterly lost.*

Page 19. You say, that *I mention this more than once as a Vindication of the Church (of England) from being Schismatics, that tho' they do separate from the Church of Rome, yet they profess the fundamental Doctrines*

Principles of Christianity, and agree in the Essentials of Christian Worship. But, Sir, I desire you to name the Page, where I have mention'd this so much as once, as a Vindication of our Church from Schism; tho' you have been confident enough to print this great Untruth in a different Character, to make it the more remarkable.

Page 22. You tell me, that *the Dissenters will be apt to say, that the Notion of Uniting National Churches into one Catholic Church by visible Spiritual Superiors, will too much favor the very foundation of Popery, that is, the Doctrine of the Necessity of one visible Head of the Church, or Supreme Governor under Christ.* Yes, doubtless; he that supposes the Church to be united under a great number of Spiritual Superiors in all the several Nations of the Christian World, must infallibly believe *the necessity of one visible Head of the Church, or Supreme Spiritual Governor under Christ.* Why this Argument, Sir, will make the Dissenters as arrant Papists, as my self. For they do suppose, that the Catholic Church is compos'd of many National Churches, or great numbers of Christians in several Nations, which National Churches are compos'd of Numberless particular Congregations under the Government of visible Spiritual Superiors; I say, the Dissenters do suppose this, as much as I do.

Pag. 23. To pass over what you say of Father *Sinclare's* Book, which is very near as good an Argument against the Dissenters, as against the Established Church; because the Dissenters themselves do agree with us in almost all the Nine and Thirty Articles of Religion; I say, to pass over this, you tell me, that *tho' A. Bishop Laud was no Papist, as appears from his Writings, nor did approve of the Pope's infallibility; yet 'tis more than probable, he did highly*

approve, that the Bishop of Rome should be a Patriarch, and have some Superiority over all the Western Churches. Believe me, Sir, 'tis much more than probable, for 'tis absolutely certain, that what you say, is a great Untruth; and that had you been acquainted with the *Writings* of that excellent Prelate, you could not have said as you do. For tho' the A. Bishop did grant the Pope of Rome to be a Patriarch, which no Man in his wits will think an Argument for his being Christ's Vicar; yet the A. Bishop has invincibly proved against the Papists, that the Pope ought not to have any Superiority over all the Western Churches, in his Book against Fisher, Lond. 1639. p. 170, 171.

You add, that 'tis not easy to count the Number of those in England, who are of his Mind, that is, who do highly approve, that the Pope should have some Superiority over all the Western Churches. What Number of Dissenters in England may be of this mind, I know not; but I dare say, there is not one of the Established Church of this mind: and I desire you to prove the contrary by giving one instance, if you can.

Sir, There are many other passages, upon which I might make many reflections: but I am unwilling to enlarge a Controversy, and therefore I shall forbear.

In your 50th, 51st, and 52d Pages you pretend to have Transcribed some words of mine, only making such an alteration, as you suppose a Dissenter would make. You had indeed good reason to say, p. 49. that the alterations that are made are very visible; for whosoever will be at the pains of comparing the words in your Book with the true passages in mine, will find that my words are not only altered, but most shamefully perverted.

I am now come to your Conclusion, wherein you desire, that in the perusal of your Papers my Thoughts may *actually at that time be influenced by the power of a firm Faith concerning the future Judgment.* I have fulfilled your desire, Sir, and yet am thoroughly satisfy'd, that I have no reason to repent of any one syllable, either of the *Abridgment*, or of the *Confutation of Popery*. Give me leave now, Sir, to make the same request to your self, and intreat you seriously to consider, Whether what you have written against me, will not rise up in judgment against you at the Last great Day.

I think, I have made it appear, that *you have wrested my words to a Sense not intended by me, and not obvious to an unprejudiced Reader.* I am willing to believe, as you say, that *it was not designedly done*: and I hope you are, as you pretend, *willing to acknowledge your Error.*

You seem to imagin, that what You have written will eventually redound to my disreputation. 'Tis my comfort, Sir, that No body seems to imagin it besides your self. *You are sorry, you say, that I should bring this evil upon my self by espousing other Mens errors.* I beseech you, Sir, suffer not this melancholy thought to afflict you overmuch. Do not lament immoderately for him, who is utterly insensible of this supposed Calamity.

Tho' I never did do any thing which could gain me esteem; yet I'll assure you, I do still account it my happiness, that I Abridg'd the *London Cases*: and I doubt you'll find it impossible for you to convince the wiser part of the World, that I have thereby espoused *other Mens Errors.* And what-

whatever you may conceive, Sir, that Book has not as yet disgraced me; and I have an humble confidence, that it never will.

To conclude, if ever I was possessed of any the least Reputation, I am convinced that your Book has not endanger'd it; and therefore I hope, you will no longer fancy your self to have wrought that mischief, which tho' you have endeavor'd, yet you have not been able to effect.

I am

Your Servant,

THO. BENNET.

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